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Does your loved one need a nursing home? ..... p. 10

Why go to church? ..... p. 14

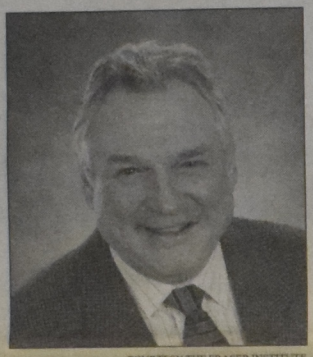
58th year of publication

B.C. considers new ways of voting

Alan Doerksen

RICHMOND, B.C. – The B.C. government is breaking new ground by taking a serious look at changing the voting system in that province. Fair Voting B.C., which supports proportional representation, is excited by the government's move – which is unprecedented in Canada.

On September 20, the B.C. government announced that it has taken its first step towards creating a citizens' assembly on electoral reform, with the appointment of Gordon Gibson to develop recommendations on how the assembly should function and be structured.



COURTESY THE FRASER INSTITUTE

Gordon Gibson

Gibson to do groundwork

"We recognize British Columbians have a variety of ideas and suggestions for how we can improve our electoral system," said Attorney General Geoff Plant, on the government's website.

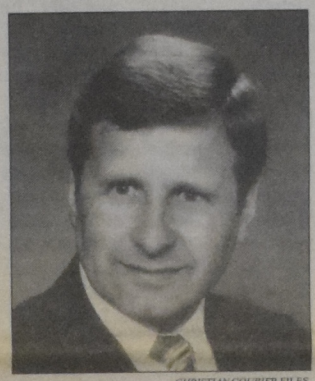
The government made a commitment to appoint a citizens' assembly to assess different models for electing the MLAs. Among the models to be considered, according to the website are "preferential ballots, proportional representation, and our current electoral system." The assembly will also have a mandate to hold public hearings throughout B.C., and whatever changes it recommends will be put to a province-wide referendum.

"Gordon Gibson's work in the area of electoral reform and governance is well-known and highly respected," said Plant. "We are pleased someone of Mr. Gibson's expertise is available to do the groundwork for the citizens' assembly."

Gibson is a senior fellow in Canadian studies at the Fraser Institute (a B.C.-based conservative think-tank) and a consultant on public and social issues. He served as an MLA in the B.C. legislature from 1974 to 1978 and led the B.C. Liberal party from 1975 to 1979. For the Canada West Foundation, Gibson wrote *What if the Wheels Fall Off? The Case for a Constituent Assembly*.

The B.C. government has given Gibson until Dec. 15 to:

- Develop a selection process for appointing the assembly members which will be random while representing a cross-section of interests;



CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Nick Loenen

- Recommend how big the assembly will be and how it will be structured;
- Develop guidelines to make sure recommendations won't conflict with the Canadian Constitution and the Westminster [traditional British] parliamentary system;
- Develop a timetable to formulate a referendum question in time for the May 2005 general election;
- Provide guidelines on the wording of referendum questions.

The committee will conduct hearings throughout B.C. and the ministry will establish a website to provide information on the citizens' assembly as well as on electoral reform.

'Totally excited'

Nick Loenen, of Fair Voting B.C., reacted by saying, "I'm totally excited about this.... Gordon Gibson is an excellent choice. He knows the issues, knows the province. He's a very competent person.... I feel very confident he will look at all aspects" of this issue. "We're breaking new ground," Loenen asserted.

John Vegt, president of Fair Voting B.C., called Gibson's appointment "a very significant first step towards a voting system that is

See **CITIZENS'** *page 2...*

The effect of a New Testament in the world's largest city

Name withheld

CHONGQING, China (BP) — The view from my window reminds me of Atlanta — 20-, 30-, 40-storey buildings stand close on streets that follow the curves of paths made long ago. Streams of people move down the sidewalks, their scattered numbers belying the millions at their source.

I can imagine being in Atlanta — until I glance to the west and glimpse the Jialing River, just visible under the morning fog. The buildings to the east frame a rectangle of the mighty Yangtze. These rivers and the mountains they flow from define a place like no other on earth. At their confluence they form the point of the heart of this place known as Chongqing, the largest city in the world.

From my window I see only a fraction of Chongqing municipality. At 50,000 square miles, it is bigger than the state of South Carolina. Once only the name of a small river town in China's Sichuan Province, Chongqing (pronounced Chong-ching) now gives its name to the municipal designation for all the farms, communities, districts, towns and cities in the region.

Economic and cultural powerhouse

Thirty-four million people supply the enormous manpower that fuels the constant construction of new buildings and infrastructure needed to make its planned prominence a reality. Together, the people and the land form what is becoming the economic and cultural powerhouse of southwest China.

Millions have relocated to Chongqing over the past 10 years, many displaced by the anticipated rise of the Yangtze and its tributaries upon completion of the Three Gorges Dam. The mammoth flood control and hydroelectric project will create a 200-mile lake and deepen the channel to allow even oil tankers to move through locks and dock at Chongqing's new harbor.

The massive public works projects of the urban districts of Chongqing are turning what were once tumbles of houses and shops hugging steep hillsides into broad new roads and handsome plazas and public squares edged in skyscrapers.

The sprawling downtown houses nine million people and is rapidly gaining a new network of bridges and a perimeter highway.

BAPTIST PRESS

Young Chinese adults learn the significance of a Buddhist stone carving on the mountainside Baodingshan monastery in Chongqing.

Cable cars and ferries carry hundreds of thousands of pedestrians back and forth across the rivers — when the pedestrians are not crisscrossing the solid, moving,

See **NEW BELIEVER** *p. 3...*

News

Citizens' assembly could recommend changes to voting system

... continued from page 1

more representative, and less polarized than what we have today."

Fair Voting B.C. has wasted no time sending its ideas about a citizen's assembly to Gibson. These ideas were actually formulated last year, says Loenen.

Gibson "has seen our submission and generally likes it," reports Loenen. He has not yet heard back officially from Gibson, but notes, "We've always enjoyed a very good working relationship."

If the B.C. government chooses to change that province's voting system, "it's very important this not come from the politicians," insists Loenen, because that would be "a huge conflict of interest."

Loenen observes that the B.C. government has already let voters know when the next provincial election will be: May 17, 2005. This is something very unusual on the Canadian political scene. Fair Voting B.C. supports the idea of holding a referendum on an alternative voting system in conjunction with the next provincial election, if the citizen's assembly makers such a recommendation.

A big departure

Describing his new mandate to *Christian Courier*, Gibson explained, "My job is to say, 'What's this object [the assembly] supposed to look like.'"

Gibson acknowledges that he is breaking new ground with this project. "Constitution-making, historically, has been done by panels of experts, elected people, and that's about it." Calling on "ordinary folks drawn at random is a big departure.... To the best of my knowledge, it's never been used anywhere for constitutional amendment."

Devising machinery

Part of Gibson's job is to decide how the assembly's members will be chosen. "I'm devising machinery for selecting these people," he explains. The people will be chosen by lot, but questions remain such as, "Are we going to try to balance gender? What numbers are we going to have?" he notes.

Another question is: "What should these people be paid?" asks Gibson. "They'll probably be working for a year. That's an important question because we don't want to turn off people from joining this group."

Once an assembly is put together, the next challenge will be "a major educational task and a major socialization task," says Gibson. Chance are the people involved will never have met each other before and will have spent an average of 17 minutes thinking about election reform, he suggests. Therefore, they will need to get to know each other and learn more about the issue at hand. Gibson needs to design a structure that will help facilitate the work of the assembly's members.

After the assembly does its work, if it decided only one change is required, the provincial referendum will be easy, says Gibson. But more complex recommendations will affect the referendum.

Already, says Gibson, "I've received a lot of suggestions" on how to change B.C.'s electoral system. But that's the assembly's job to deal with, not his, he clarifies.

Asked if other provinces and the federal government should consider such a project, Gibson cautions, "that's not really for me to say." But he asserts that this project shows "B.C.'s really becoming a lighthouse in Canada" regarding electoral reform. Gibson would be "astonished" if other parts of Canada do not consider this, too.

Calvin students develop sweet new mission field: Krispy Creme

COURTESY CALVIN COLLEGE

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Students from a Calvin College residence hall spent a week camped out at a new Grand Rapids Krispy Kreme store in a quest to win free donuts for a year.

That week included some of the coldest evening temperatures of the fall as well as several days of wet weather. But the group endured. And in the end they secured eight of the first dozen spots in line, earning 96 donuts a week (eight dozen) for a year.

They also built camraderie and dorm spirit that those who camped say won't soon be forgotten.

It all started during orientation week at Calvin when representatives from Krispy Kreme gave out free donuts at a movie night on campus. They also announced that the first 12 people into the store on opening day would receive free donuts for a year (a dozen a week for 52 weeks).

Three resident assistants in Boer Hall started scheming about how to win the prize. When all was said and done RAs Jeff Konczal of Powell, Ohio, Matt DeKam of Leota, Minn., and Dave Boven of Elmhurst, Ill., had a plan that eventually included tents, a motor home and a schedule that saw at least two Calvin students on the Krispy Kreme premises at all times.

They even held a church service in the Krispy Kreme parking lot on September 22, complete with a sermon from Matt Lind, a youth pastor at Sunshine CRC, and rousing praise songs with lyrics projected onto the big Krispy Kreme tent. The next day included a Boer cook-out followed by a concert by a local Christian rock band and then the showing of a movie (projected onto the wall of the new store).

Finally, on September 24, after a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by the mayors of both Grand Rapids and Kentwood, the doors opened at exactly 5:30 a.m. and the crowd rushed in to get free donuts and T-shirts. And then the students returned to Calvin with satisfied stomachs, fond memories and the pleasant prospect of many more donuts to come.

The effort was great for dorm unity, says Konzcal. "Without everyone's participation, it wouldn't work. We'll never forget this."

~with reporting by media relations student writer Abe Huyser-Honig

Former NDP leader calls for new voting system in Canada

Ed Broadbent and Hugh Segal (edited by CC Staff)

Ed Broadbent, the former national leader of the New Democratic Party is calling for a change to Canada's electoral system, which would better reflect Canadian voting preferences, and allow more opportunity for parties such as the NDP to be better represented in Parliament.

In a recent issue of the *Globe and Mail*, Broadbent and co-writer Hugh Segal (a former chief of staff to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney) criticized Canada's "winner-take-all electoral system" because it has been "effectively disenfranchising whole regions and millions of Canadians" who are not Liberal supporters. Most democracies in the world, the writers point out, "have embraced some form of proportional, alternative or mixed voting systems," while Canadians carry on with a system that worsens regional tensions "and undermines the notion of equal citizenship."

'Your vote does not count!'

"What message does our 'first past the post' system send to young people who may want to vote for the Green Party in Nova Scotia, or to more conservative young professionals who vote Alliance in Quebec, or daycare supporters who vote NDP in Alberta?" ask the writers. "The message is really very clear and dismissive: 'Your vote does not count!'

"Our system, created in the United Kingdom for a two-party society, has been suffocating Canada's multi-party society for decades, reflecting the triumph only of those who voted for the winning candidate in their local riding.

CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Ed Broadbent

"The 'first past the post' system also exacerbates our regional divisions. It creates a huge incentive for parties to focus on one region, so their vote concentrates. As all of those who voted NDP in Alberta are uncounted, along with those who voted Conservative in Ontario, Alliance in Atlantic Canada, and Liberals in rural Alberta — Parliament simply does not reflect their views. Regions are represented only by the parties who come first — and in our existing system, one can win in a four-candidate race with 25.1 per cent of the vote. The other 74.9 per cent do not count at all. The fact that one can have three-quarters of the electorate vote against you and still you go to Parliament should cause us all to think...."

Broadbent and Segal argue that British-based Parliamentary systems in other countries, including Scotland and New Zealand, have been reformed to a mix of "first past the post" seats and proportional representation.

A more serious problem

"For those who argue that anything but our existing system will fail to produce majority governments — seen by many as a more effective governing vehicle — it is surely fair to respond that 'majority' governments reflective of only a minority of the eligible voters in a democracy is a more serious problem. Stable government composed of more than one party is now the effective norm in continental Europe," contend the writers.

"The good news is, some change is under way. Quebec's Parti Québécois government has proposed a series of reforms for public consultation.... Ontario's Liberals, if elected, are committed to a royal commission to consider electoral reform. Meantime, nothing is happening in Ottawa. A country that derives its legitimacy from the democratic process has a duty to increase the incentives for people to vote. Electoral reform is not about right or left, east or west, French or English. It is about democracy and the ways it can be strengthened and the price we will all pay if it is allowed to weaken further."

News/Politics

New believer expects spiritual growth in Chinese city

BAPTIST PRESS PHOTOS

While Chongqing is emerging as China's modern business centre, much of it is still rural farmland, where people await saving faith.

... continued from page 1

honking tangles of buses, taxis, trucks and cars on every street and road.

The honking is continuous in traffic that seems like a metaphor for the vitality of the place. Wherever there are two lanes of pavement, there are at least three lanes of traffic. Five-lane roads automatically serve at least seven lanes of vehicles, not counting the motor scooters and carts. There are no stop signs, and traffic lights are just being introduced. But pedestrians dart fearlessly through the moving cars as if they were threading their way through a parking lot.

Local shops, businesses, street vendors, American fast-food restaurants and European designer boutiques blend in the booming core areas of Jiefangbei and Shapingba. Amid the business people in their sophisticated Western dress, porters — called Bang-Bang Jun or stick-stick soldiers — carry heavy loads of every description with short, bamboo poles and some rope. They carry deliveries between trucks and stores, earth and rocks from the public-works projects and building materials to construction sites. Between jobs, they gather, rest and wait patiently for their next opportunities.

Driving away from downtown, we come to older streets and neighborhoods, gray-tiled houses and small shops. In front of tea-rooms, restaurants and sidewalk markets, people gather to play cards, mahjongg and chess. In one shop, the owner masterfully plays an erhu, which literally means "two strings."

A haunting backdrop

It is the signature sound of traditional Chinese music and produces a haunting backdrop for the urban roar that swallows its notes at the door. A second's pause to listen produces a grin, a stool and a welcome. His response to my interest is typical of these "mountain people" known for their hospitality, energy and spicy food.

The boom in industry and development has brought a wave of prosperity to the whole region. Yet some of the appreciation of the present comes from knowing the past.

The caves that honeycomb the area were used as shelters during repeated bombings by Japanese aircraft during the 1940s when Chongqing was the capital of the Nationalist Chinese government. The communist Chinese army eventually pushed out the Japanese and the nationalists.

The museum and shrine of the Hong Yan Revolutionary Memorial displays U. S. weapons said to have been used by the nationalists to execute imprisoned communists and their families before their evacuation.

A sobering display

I walked out of a sobering display of tiny shoes exhumed from mass graves and letters never sent to loved ones, thinking about people who die for their beliefs. I wondered if the local people — most of whom have been taken to this memorial as schoolchildren — have been taught to hate me because of my nationality.

As I get in the car, the ticket-office worker runs over to be sure I know that my ticket is good for a second day at the museum. She smiles and waves goodbye.

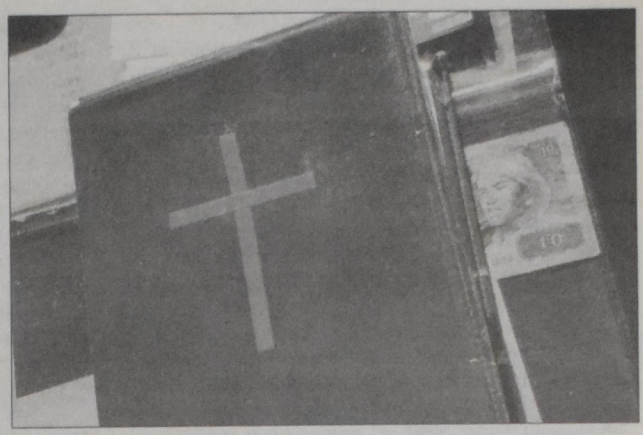
Humans are spiritual beings. The history and prehistory of every people give evidence of humanity's drive to connect with, control or placate spiritual powers. The ancestors of the Chinese were no different.

Buddhism has long had a presence in China. Blended with the teaching of Tao, the spectacular stone carvings at Dazhu, two hours from downtown Chongqing, reflect the human desire for inner peace and fear of judgment. Shrines and carvings dot the cliffs of terraced hillsides, forests and gardens of the beautiful countryside.

The scenes of punishment for evildoers in the afterlife are especially grim. Even in worn stone, the helpless figures compellingly express their specific moments of eternal torture. At a nearby shrine on the road, a procession of worshipers uses tambourines, colored flags, incense and firecrackers to focus on the possibilities of this life and hopefully avoid the worst in the next.

Located two hours on the other side of downtown Chongqing is the sizeable city of Fuling. Tourists who go there usually visit nearby Ghost City. Located on the Yangtze above the soon-to-be-relocated town of Fengdu, it will have the river at its gate when the Three Gorges Dam is finished.

Not as ancient as the cliff carvings of Dazhu, Ghost City captures the fear of death and judgment in an even more graphic way. This Buddhist representation of hell



A young Chinese professional, headed for a job in international economics, found faith in Christ by reading a borrowed New Testament in Chongqing, the nation's largest city, encompassing 34 million people in a region larger than South Carolina.

leads the visitor down the Grave Road. A sign explains that every dead person must travel this way to the netherworld. With enough good works accomplished in life, a person may be armed to resist or escape the "ghosts" or demons portrayed by the fierce statues lining the way.

While the stone goblins serve as backdrops for tourists' snapshots, the sense of judgment and hopelessness is palpable. At the top of the Grave Road in Ghost City stands the temple of the king of the underworld. Inside, an enormous statue sits enthroned, guarded by more demons and surrounded by stern-looking judges. The sign in English translates his title as the "King of Heaven."

Logically, I can understand that a translator might choose heaven to express the Chinese word for afterlife. Yet, it stuns me to realize no one who knows about heaven would ever use that name for this place.

Time of great opportunity

The diversity and growth in the municipality of Chonqing is undeniable. It has a strong military presence. Thousands of future government employees are trained here. It is a time of great change, great movement and great opportunity. Thoughts are to the future, with all its uncertainties and promise.

Believers in the municipality can see God at work all around them. Daily they see evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in the midst of the organized chaos of their city's transformation into China's new economic and political centre.

A young Chongqing professional found Christ while reading a borrowed New Testament, which represents the hope and the challenge facing this remarkable place. She believes God sought her, changed her and is guiding her to a strategic role for his use.

She is an outstanding product of her country's educational system. She has been chosen for a job in international economics and will be moving soon. This recently baptized Christian sees God's purpose in her salvation and promotion. Her great desire is that Jesus will help her to grow and will use her to take the gospel to her new home.

She also hopes that God will bring her back one day to witness to her family and help believers in her beloved hometown.

Wondering how someone who has grown up in this ancient river town views its incredible progress, I ask how things are different now in Chongqing than they were five years ago.

"Now there is money, and we have ability," she says. "This is our opportunity, and we have shown we will not waste it."

I ask, "In 20 years, do you think Chongqing will be as well-known in the world as Hong Kong or Shanghai?"

Her eyes shine as she predicts both an economic and spiritual outcome for her city. "It won't take 20 years," she says. "We have the Chongqing spirit, and it will bear fruit."

Her answer reminds me of preconceptions I had about believers in China before I visited the largest city in the world. I thought they must be very brave to be Christians. Now I know that it is Christ living in them that makes them brave.

Reprinted from **The Commission,** *monthly magazine of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. The name of the writer of this story is withheld for security reasons to protect the writer's ongoing work in China.*

Editorial

On being under the influence

Harry der Nederlanden

On Oct. 4 and 5, I attended a conference at Redeemer celebrating the legacy of Evan Runner where there was a lot of talk about the influence of Runner on an entire generation. I will report on the conference in the next issue, so I won't talk about it now, but my thoughts flow out of that conference. They are about influence.

Runner's genius or, better, his gift, was to get his students talking not first of all about personalities but about bigger themes, not about the salt and pepper but about the whole enchilada. Under Runner's tutelage students were soon talking about all of reality, about history from the time of the Greeks to the present, or actually from creation to the new heaven and the new earth, about human life in its totality, about society as a whole and about political power on a global scale, about the structure of all of creation and the battle between the powers of darkness and the children of light, about what the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth is doing with and in and around those whom he calls to serve as his agents, his "little people" here in Middle Earth.

Unlike many of those present at the conference, I cannot call Dr. Runner my spiritual father or even my mentor, for I got "turned on" elsewhere, largely at home by my mother and father. Yet, from the first time I heard him speak, I knew he had something I wanted, something I needed. During a conference session with Harry van Dyke, Professor of History at Redeemer, I heard a brief story about how he came under the mentorship of Dr. Runner and the (in)famous Groen Club. He was standing by his locker, when a short man wearing a rumpled brown suit and fedora asked him, "Are you from Canada?"

"I don't know how he could tell," mused Van Dyke, "maybe the haircut." But Runner seemed to have a nose for smelling out "wetbacks" from Canada.

"Why did you come to Calvin?" he asked the young freshman.

"Because I'm tired of butting heads with my teachers and want to study history from a Christian perspective." (I'm quoting from memory, but that was the gist of his answer as he tells it.)

One of 'Runner's boys'

That Thursday night Harry van Dyke found himself in Room 32 on the Franklin Campus on his way to becoming one of "Runner's boys," one of hundreds of students who came under the profound influence of this great teacher.

But influence is a strange thing. Harry van Dyke was very ready to *be* influenced, it seems to me. He came to Calvin looking for something. And Evan Runner was dishing it out – in huge, glorious, cosmic ladles. Yes, Van Dyke did learn a lot from Runner — as did a great many of us. But he was ready and eager to learn, and not just to learn anything, but to learn to see the world whole with Christian eyes.

I ended up going to Dordt rather than to Calvin, so I didn't come under Runner's direct influence. But I, too, went off to college looking for and expecting to have my understanding opened in a cosmoscopic direction, to see the world of studies illumined by the presence and promise of God. I came to Dordt with Van Riessen's *Society of the Future* and a copy of *Christian Perspectives 1960*, which contained Runner's lectures on *"The Relation of the Bible to Learning."* In fact, I read the latter sitting in the back of a 1952 Chevy crammed between my best friend and another fellow who would also become a roommate and friend. There was lots of time to read because our driver, packed in the front with his wife and two kids, never went over 50 m.p.h. If I remember right, the trip to Iowa took us about two weeks. By that time I loved philosophy and hated kids.

Hitching a ride to hear Runner

Although I was at Dordt, half a continent (and mindset) away from Calvin, Runner did exert an attraction on me and on some other students as well. Some mimeographed copies of notes and Groen Club papers found their way to Iowa, and once I hitched a ride to Grand Rapids and sat in on one of Runner's lectures. While other college students were driving hundreds of miles to go to rock concerts, quite a number of young Dutch-Canadian Calvinists like myself were driving hundreds of miles to hear what a short man of Scottish-Irish descent from Pennsylvania had to say about Knowing and Reality and God.

Was this all due to "Runner's influence"? It would be a mistake, of course, to play off the movement of the Spirit against those human connections we can trace, as if God uses only supernatural means. But in tracing influences, we tend to focus on charismatic figures.

I got turned on by growing up in an immigrant community that stimulated me to ask the big questions. Pastors probably wonder whether anyone is really paying attention as they labor over their sermons, but for me, a kid who got almost all his schooling in public schools, Sunday's sermons were something to paddle with. And when you're going down a rough river in a canoe, it's good to have a paddle.

The preaching of Louis Tamminga had me looking at the world around me and the life before me as a stage set by the Creator and Redeemer well before I'd ever heard of Runner or Dooyeweerd. But perhaps even here I'm focusing too much on a single person just because he had a prominent place in the community.

Fertile, exciting places

And then there were the Young People's Societies: in the late '50s they were fertile, exciting places. We were expected to introduce a biblical or ethical topic by doing some research and writing a short essay setting forth our own views. Because the meetings were run by the young people themselves, there was no authority figure to stifle discussion or keep us from throwing out heretical notions and outrageous questions. But we were trusted to work them out largely on our own.

Pretty well every church had a small library of solidly Reformed books like S.G. de Graaf's *Promise and Deliverance* (in Dutch) that saw considerable use. When my high school history teacher made a caricature of Calvin and Calvinism in class, I could draw on a couple of Eeerdmans books from the church library to refute his distortions. Another treasure trove of books was to be found in Mr. Woudstra's bookshop. When my father and I visited him periodically, he'd be sitting behind his desk puffing on his pipe (he puffed that pipe even though he had trouble breathing); he would ask you questions and point out books to you, Dutch and English, often summarizing their content. That's where I got H.H. Meeter's book on Calvinism and where (on Tamminga's advice) my father bought me Van Riessen's *Society of the Future* for my 17th birthday.

But there were people in Edmonton and Beverly whose names I didn't know then and don't know now who talked about the need for a Christian labor union and Christian political action; they organized meetings, arranged for speakers, and when my father went, I tagged along. There I heard Evan Runner and Hendrik van Riessen speak for the first time.

In short, the immigrant community in which I grew up was not composed of individuals preoccupied with making it in the new country. They worked hard, but they took responsibility for shaping the world around them. They were *citizens*, that is, people who felt empowered and called to create organizations, a world of them, in fact, that reflected the central place of faith in their lives.

Without trying to diminish the importance of Runner's influence, I want to point to something simple, something we took for granted. The Dutch immigrants that came to North America were people who were *empowered*, probably by a broad Kuyperian Calvinism that made them assume the whole world is God's world and as such it should look like it and sound like it. Wherever it didn't, they sought to change it. And Runner provided a program, a platform, a vision of the whole where that attitude made sense.

Influence? Yes, but it was an influence that flowed both ways. The Spirit does that: he empowers not just some, but all to be children of God.

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Letter/News

Edmonton Christian school strike: the board's perspective

I would like to respond to two letters recently printed by your publication regarding the labor difficulties experienced last winter by Edmonton Christian School and the Edmonton Society for Christian Education.

As chairperson of the board that was deeply immersed in the labor strife, I thought your readers might be interested in hearing our perspective on what occurred and why, when the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) went on strike, our board chose to make the best of a difficult situation rather than severing our agreement with Edmonton Public Schools (EPS).

Prayer-filled, richly debated decision

Four years ago the membership of our Society voted 75 per cent in favor of partnering with Edmonton Public Schools to become an alternative Christian program within the larger public system. The decision to partner with EPS was prayer-filled, richly debated and arrived at only after a lengthy and exhaustive process of consultation with the Society. Ultimately, we believe the Society was guided by the Lord in this decision.

Since that time we have enjoyed a fruitful, positive and mutually beneficial relationship with Edmonton Public Schools. Our enrollment has grown by 375 students; our teachers are participating fully in Edmonton Public committees; and the partnership has enhanced the level of awareness and respect for Reformed Christian education in the city. Our teachers and administrators, along with board members, are continuing to positively influence the public school system and the ATA through conduct and participation in key areas.

Despite our relationship with a public system — certainly an anomaly within the traditional Christian educational communities across Canada — our ability to provide a Christian education that integrates faith, learning and service in all areas has in no way been impeded. In fact, because our financial situation is healthier as a result of our partnership, we are able to focus our energies on expanding the development of Christian curriculum, expanding the service component of our Christian schooling, and we are embarking on a $5-million facilities expansion at our high school campus and one of our elementary/junior high campuses.

But when our Society became partners with Edmonton Public Schools, our teachers and administrators became Edmonton Public employees and were required by law to be members of the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA). In essence, union membership was forced upon them as it often is where Christians work in our society.

Prior to and during the strike, the board held three public meetings to discuss the issues and help provide students and parents with contingency plans. A few Society members felt we should force the teachers back to work and sever the relationship with EPS. But the vast majority of parents and Society members did not support that position.

Is striking unChristian?

Is striking or union membership unChristian? There is no unanimity on those difficult questions by the school's supporting community or its teachers. Within the school's supporting community is a range of occupations including some that are unionized. A condition of employment as a unionized employee is working within the desires of the majority including, in some cases, going on strike.

It would have been fundamentally unfair to ask our teachers to risk their jobs and face repercussions from the ATA when we do not ask the same of other unionized Society members. And so the board felt the right decision in these circumstances was to support our teachers.

Had the board tried to force the teachers back to work (who, by the way, were no longer employed by the Society) and keep our school campuses open for classes during the strike (in violation of our lease agreement with EPS) we would most certainly have jeopardized the agreement with EPS. Not only would that have violated the trust placed in the Board by the Society, we would have also squandered a wonderful opportunity to offer Christian education to more students.

One of the letters you printed about this situation suggested Edmonton Christian School had abandoned a principled model of education in favor of an economic model. It could be argued that most private Christian schools are more heavily biased toward an economic model simply because of the high fees charged, lower salaries paid and omnipresent financial difficulties that are part of their existence. We now have the luxury of allowing our other principles to take precedence.

So let me be clear: Edmonton Christian School offers a Biblical-based schooling model, integrating Christ in all aspects of schooling. There is no higher model than that. We have a different governance model, but the vision and mission of our school and the school Society have not wavered. The basis of our partnership with Edmonton Public Schools is that Edmonton Christian School is the alternative program in that system that provides a transformational Christian educational vision.

That we are able to offer that model of Christian education to more students because our program fees have dropped is a cause for celebration. Finances no longer pose quite the same barrier to Christian education – our doors are open to all who sincerely desire a Christian education, not just the wealthy. That our teachers and administrators are providing leadership in areas of curriculum development, and leadership on the main stage of education in our city is a dream fulfilled.

The letter writers obviously share the same concern for Christian education as do the parents and members of the Edmonton Society for Christian Education. Although we may disagree with many of the points raised in their letters, we appreciate the writers taking the time to express their views.

Joanne Munro, Chairperson,
Edmonton Society for Christian Education, Edmonton, Alta.

Credit cards nudge out collection plates in some churches

Chris Herlinger

NEW YORK, New York (ENI) — In increasing numbers, U.S. parishioners are telling their churches: "Put that on my credit card."

While electronic giving may never entirely replace the traditional collection plate, charging offerings to a credit card or bank account is becoming an increasingly popular way to donate to a local parish or congregation.

Reflective, not reflexive giving

"This is about reflective giving, rather than reflexive giving," said Andrew Goldberger, the co-founder of ParishPay, a New York-based company that has established an electronic credit-card payment system now being used by churches in New York, Illinois and California.

Rather than fumbling through pockets for bills or coins during a worship service, the system allows parishioners to set aside a designated amount each week or month which is automatically deducted from credit cards or bank accounts.

"It's a more thoughtful way of giving," Goldberger told ENI in an interview. "It also makes it easier for people to give."

Among the company's clients are Greek Orthodox parishes in New York and the Catholic archdioceses of Chicago, Illinois, and San Jose, California. The firm expects to announce that it is signing on a number of Protestant groups shortly, as well as several Jewish bodies, he said.

The firm charges $1 US for each donor and a one per cent service fee for each transaction: so, for example, a church will receive a $98 donation for every $100 contributed.

Goldberger noted that since the churches enrolled have seen an increase in donations, they are not missing the $2 that is charged for the service. They have also a more stable income, resulting in better cash flow during summers and other periods when church attendance in the United States tends to decline.

Goldberger underscored that the system is not intended as a turning away from worship attendance; in fact, by making more of a financial commitment, members are likely to have more personal "investment" in their churches and synagogues.

Jack Wilkerson, the vice-president of finance for the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination, disagrees with credit-card giving.

While the Southern Baptists have not taken a formal position on the issue and could not prevent individual churches from adopting a credit-card system because of the autonomy they enjoy, Wilkerson said he and many others within the denomination object. They believe offerings within a structure of formal worship is integral to the Christian tradition, calling it a biblical mandate "to bring tithes to the storehouse."

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905)-682-8313, or by e-mail to: editor@christiancourier.ca

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News/Agriculture

'We strongly reiterate our warning of genocide in Sudan'

Eric Reeves

NORTHAMPTON, Mass. (ANS) — There have been a few voices, but far too few, condemning the ongoing humanitarian blockade imposed on Southern Sudan by Khartoum's National Islamic Front regime. Strong condemnation has come from Andrew Natsios, Director of the U.S. Agency for International Development, from Human Rights Watch, and from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Committee on Conscience, which recently declared that, "We strongly reiterate our warning of genocide in Sudan."

Wire report snippets have made their way into the back pages of a few newspapers, but in the main, the international community is ignoring the plight, daily more urgent, of the three million human beings presently denied all medical and food aid by Khartoum.

International aid could be permanently shut out

Actions that could result in the deaths of many tens of thousands of innocent women and men, especially children and the elderly, are proceeding largely without condemnation — and certainly without credible or effective pressure to cease. As a consequence of this international acquiescence, it is increasingly likely that Khartoum will calculate that it now has the means to shut down completely — and permanently — international aid from the northern Kenyan town of Lokichokio. This will have the effect of ending the UN's Operation Lifeline Sudan in meaningful form.

Starvation as a weapon

The Chairman of the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum's Committee on Conscience put the matter bluntly and all too accurately: "Once again, the Sudanese government is attempting to use starvation as a weapon of destruction against its own citizens. If the ban is not lifted, many innocent people will die. It will create an emergency of immense proportions."

Indeed, the Committee on Conscience declared in words that should demand the deepest moral attention of the world community: "We strongly reiterate our warning of genocide in Sudan."

Human Rights Watch has issued a similarly urgent statement:

"This was the recipe for the famine of 1998: massive displacement of civilians by war into areas where food is projected to be scarce, plus a sudden government ban on humanitarian access to the disaster areas."

Khartoum's campaign of destruction

Engineered famine, deliberate aerial assaults on civilian and humanitarian targets, the efforts to cripple the southern food economy and civil society, massive scorched-earth campaigns in the oil regions — this has long been the face of Khartoum's campaign of destruction against the peoples of Southern Sudan.

But even for Khartoum, the shutdown of all humanitarian aid access, with no provision even for emergency medical evacuation, is without precedent. And yet the response of the international community has been weak and ineffectual. News coverage has been appallingly thin.

Effortless savagery

And of course the National Islamic Front regime is even now assessing this response, calculating the costs of this effortless savagery — and the conclusion is all too easily drawn. With no significant price to pay, Khartoum will simply continue beyond the October 6 "deadline" that has been only ambiguously set. They will thus succeed in doing what they have long wished to do: end UN and other humanitarian operations out of Lokichokio (Kenya), where aid organizations can operate without interference from Khartoum in their basic mission: aiding civilians in need wherever they are and regardless of military front lines.

"We strongly reiterate our warning of genocide in Sudan," declares the Committee on Conscience of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in the wake of Khartoum's brutally destructive interdiction of all humanitarian aid to the people of Southern Sudan.

Can we have a stronger warning? Can the moral and political task at hand be made clearer? Those for whom this question is unambiguous should let their views be known to those in leadership in the world community.

Eric Reeves is doing research for a book on Sudan and has done a great deal of research on the role of oil development in sustaining Sudan's agony. He serves as a policy and advocacy consultant to a number of humanitarian and non-governmental organizations and has testified on Sudan twice before the House International Relations Committee, before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, and before the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Farming, fly fishing and the free market

Elbert van Donkersgoed

Watching 100 sandhill cranes skip from barley field to hay field to cattle pasture was a lovely added feature to last week's hay ride on Tom & Mary Kay Milesnick's ranch — a pleasant way to start a conference.

The ranch near Bozeman, Montana was the start of a conference on taking care of the environment in such a way that it benefits a farm business. There were 20 invitees, all journalists from across the United States with one Canadian included for good measure.

The Milesnick enterprise, MZ-Ranch, is a prime example of what this conference was exploring. The ranch is a 450 cow-calf operation, and one of its properties has eight kilometres of spring-fed creeks meandering through it. Tom and Mary Kay have set out to demonstrate that their creeks can have good water quality without fencing the creeks to keep out the cattle.

A recreation business on the ranch

Thompson Creek once resembled a wide drainage ditch with banks tramped back well into the pastures. Today it meanders, the banks are stable, and quality grass edges the stream. There are off-stream water tanks, cattle crossing areas made of road fabric and stone, backwaters where minnows gather and water that supports a recreation business on the ranch: fly fishing — a more profitable business than the cow-calf operation.

The change on the MZ-Ranch started with an investment of $60,000 US for the reconstruction of the creeks. Thompson Creek was made narrower and longer with meanders, backwaters and deep pools. The banks were planted with grasses and thousands of willow cuttings. The cattle were kept away for two years to let the new growth get established. The pasture is now stable right to the water's edge.

The Milesnicks made a second major change. They switched from being cattle feeders to grass managers. The cattle are routinely moved from one pasture to another, never staying so long that the grasses, particularly those along the stream banks, are at risk. Most pastures are grazed five times per season — the length varies. One pasture that includes a creek is grazed only at night.

Fishermen from around world

The third change was informing the fly fishing fraternity that there was an improved opportunity on their ranch. They now issue six permits per day and charge $75 U.S. per rod — $50 in the spring and fall. The creeks on the Milesnick ranch now have fishermen from across the U.S., Japan, Great Britain and France through the day. At night cattle graze the banks.

The Milesnicks are demonstrating that agriculture and a quality environment can go hand in hand.

More information about the MZ-Ranch can be found at **www.milesnickrecreation.com**. The Agriculture and the Environment conference was sponsored by the Centre for Free Market Environmentalism

Elbert van Donkersgoed is the Strategic Policy Advisor of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Canada. This was first heard as a Corner Post on CFCO Radio, Chatham and CKNX Radio, Wingham, Ontario on September 20, 2002. Copyright 2002 Terra Coeur. Corner Post is archived on the website of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario: www.christianfarmers.org.

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Arts/Media

Ambitious new book series brings Christian history to life

Ron VandenBurg

With *The Veil Is Torn* and *A Pinch of Incense*, the first two volumes available, this ambitious series *The Christians — Their First Two Thousand Years* will detail in fifteen volumes the story of Christ's followers from Pentecost to the present.

The publisher of the series, Ted Byfield, is also the founder and publisher of the Canadian national news magazine called *The Report*, which will be 29 years old this fall. *The Report* has a paid circulation of 45,000, most of it in Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan with about 5,000 readers in Ontario. In addition, Byfield writes a weekly column, mostly on national politics, for the Sun newspapers in the West, which is also carried by the *London Free Press*. He is also the founding editor of *Alberta in the Twentieth Century*, a 12-volume history of the province. Celebrating 53 years in the news business, the 74-year-old journalist shared his thoughts about *The Christians*.

Question: ***Where did the initial idea for the Christian History Project come from?***

We had a number of reasons for undertaking the Christian series. For one, many intelligent and otherwise well-informed Christians know almost nothing of what Christians did in the 19 centuries between the first and the twentieth. This is a grave deficiency. History serves as society's collective memory, in much the same way that your personal memory serves you personally. That is, what you do today is largely governed by your past experience. As Christians, we should be similarly guided by our collective experience of the past. But if we don't know what happened to us in the past, we lack critically important information that will help us decide what to do now.

Facing an increasingly hostile society

Second, we are facing — and should realize this — an increasingly hostile society. The news media, television, much popular music, the liberal arts academy, the currently dominant educational philosophy, are all (with very few exceptions) slanted decidedly against us. This bias is frequently reflected in their portrayal of Christian history. But the effect of this bias is to make Christians ashamed of our own past. While it's certainly far from perfect, it's worth noting that Christianity is the founding faith of the Western world, and most of the rest of the world wants to move here.

THE CHRISTIAN HISTORY PROJECT WEBSITE GRAPHICS

A Pinch of Incense: *the second volume of* The Christians — Their First Two Thousand Years

Third, the Christian story, century by century, is a tremendously thrilling narrative, studded with very courageous and colorful people, most good, some bad, but none of them boring. It's a real-life adventure, and can be told that way. In other words, it's a great story. We find that people who get into these books can't put them down.

Question: ***What kind of format does the series have?***

The books are patterned on those of the Alberta series that preceded the Christian one as a kind of pilot project. They in turn were patterned on the *Time-Life* history of the Second World War — clear, intelligent writing, in a journalistic rather than academic style, accompanied by the best possible photography.

Finest illustrative artists

For the Christian series, the problem is of course that there was no photography for the first 19 of the 20 Christian centuries. We therefore recruited the finest illustrative artists we could find in the United States and Canada — people who regularly work for *National Geographic*, the big book publishing houses, MGM and so on. These have illustrated the stories. But the art is very much in a literal, almost semi-photographic style, intended to convey the message that these events really happened, that these people actually lived, that we're not dealing in mythology.

Question: ***What have been some of the challenges creating the project?***

There have been two major challenges. First, finding the money to get it started. We needed $5 million, found $4 million, got it under way, and are still looking for the remaining million in investment. However, Christians with the means to invest in it are coming forward, now that they can see for themselves what we're doing and why. The second challenge is marketing the books. The major markets are in the U.S. and we're not at all known there. But the sales are rising very rapidly as people discover the books, and we think we'll be what they call "cash positive" by spring.

Question: ***Who has made up the team that has created the series?***

On the editorial side, there are four key players. The first is the associate editor, Calvin Demmon, who works out of his home near Monterey, California. I've known Calvin for about 30 years. He was the first executive editor of our newsmagazines. He has spent the last quarter century in the American newspaper business. I'll mention the other three names alphabetically because they're all equally important — Moira Calder, the research director, and Jack Keaschuk, the art director, both of whom came from the Alberta history project. The third is the volume planner, Barrett Pashak, who directed research for the newsmagazines for some years.

In addition to these, about 60 other people are involved on a free-lance basis — some 20 professional writers, mostly journalists, and all Christians, some Protestant, some Catholic, some Evangelicals, some Orthodox; about 12 professional illustrators, some 15 academic historians who guide the research and check everything the journalists write, and about a dozen research assistants who read the books the academics recommend, making notes that the writers work from. The free-lancers live all over North America. Together, we make a good team and we get better at the job with each volume.

Question: ***What has guided your choice of stories from the whole history of Christendom?***

I'm afraid that you can take the journalist out of the newspaper business, but you can't take the newspaper business out of the journalist. In other words, we judge the way we present events that happened 17 or 18 centuries ago much as we (as journalists) judge events that happen now. Two factors enter into every decision. First, how significant is this event or this person, meaning how will it or they affect the events that follow? (The historian has an advantage here; he knows what followed; the journalist can only guess.) Second, how interesting is it? We're acutely conscious that if the story bores the reader, we lose the reader. Then it doesn't matter what we have to say because the reader isn't going to read it anyway. Fortunately, however, Christian history consists of thousands of fascinating events and people, so it isn't hard to keep it interesting.

Paul bids farewell to the Christians of Ephesus — *an illustration by Greg Harlin from the book series.*

Question: ***What benefit will today's Christian receive reading these old stories?***

As I noted, if you know what happened in the past, you're far better equipped to handle the present. And the present is confronting Christians with major problems. Then, too, to see what amazing things Christians before us did, the horrendous problems they faced and how through the grace of God they met and solved them, to see these things is to find yourself filled with confidence. For the same God who moved them moves us. As St. Paul said, what have we to be afraid of? It takes away fear and foreboding.

Question: ***How will this series create change?***

The series changes people. Or rather, Christ through the stories of his servants down through the ages, changes people. And people change the world. That has been the Christian experience for the last 20 centuries and it will be of the 21st as well.

But the series does one other thing: it gives you a sense of roots, a sense of family. You gradually discover that you're not viewing these remote people as them, but as us! They didn't do these remarkable things. We did! We're all one team, one fellowship, all over the world and all through history. And we, in our term, in our time, can through the grace of Christ continue in the same way, do things just as remarkable.

Some dark pages

You realize we're one family. Yes, there are some dark pages in the family's past — though fewer, actually, than we're usually given to understand. But then, what family doesn't have dark pages? We're intended to learn from this. And we also find that for every dark page there are a hundred bright ones.

Finally, it helps you see that God has a purpose for each of us. Each is fitted, designed as it were, to do some one job, to play some unique part that no one else could play. And that, too, will become an element in the whole Christian story. When we view things this way, we find we create great change.

Question: ***How can readers of this article get more information about the Christian History Project?***

People can request our first volume without paying for it up front. We'd like families to make an informed decision to purchase the series, so we will send the book for a two-week preview. You can request a preview copy by calling 1-800-853-5402. There is also an order form on our website at **www.christianhistoryproject.com.** A significant discount is available for people who purchase the entire series up front.

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Church

Bishop warns of revolution if Nigeria won't fight corruption

Obed Minchakpu

LAGOS, Nigeria (ENI) — Nigerian Roman Catholic and Anglican Church bishops have warned that unless the government makes strenuous efforts to check pandemic corruption in the country, there might be a revolution that could sweep political leaders from power.

The bishops uttered their warnings in interviews with ENI focusing on what they considered to be the pervasive nature which corruption had assumed in Africa's most populous country.

Cancerous corruption

The Rev. Gabriel Abegunrin, Catholic bishop of the Oshogbo diocese in southwestern Nigeria, told ENI that corruption had become "cancerous" in the polity of Nigeria. He stressed the urgency of the need for a surgical operation to be carried out on the country's political system.

He accused federal cabinet ministers, legislators and other political office-bearers of working against the interests of the nation's 126 million people by thwarting a recently proposed anti-corruption law.

BBC ONLINE

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo

"[Nigerian] President Olusegun Obasanjo has good intentions in establishing the anti-corruption commission but unfortunately, members of his cabinet, who are supposed to work with him, are not helping him. Those who are supposed to back him are themselves involved in corruption," Abegunrin said.

Transparency International, a non-governmental organization working to eradicate corruption, in its 2002 index rated Nigeria as the second most corrupt country in the world, only beaten by Bangladesh. The organization had surveyed 102 countries for its annual report, released August 28.

Keeping many nations in poverty

When presenting the report in Berlin, Peter Eigen, president of Transparency International, said corruption was keeping many nations in poverty and hampering development — despite pledges by political leaders to crack down on it.

"The political elite and their cronies continue to take kickbacks at every opportunity," he said, adding that, "corruption is perceived to be dangerously high in poor parts of the world, but also in many countries whose firms invest in developing nations."

Bishop Abegunrin warned: "The truth is that, if those who are supposed to do the right thing fail to check corruption, then the populace will rise against them. I hope they [political leaders] will not wait for a revolution to take place before they act. They must know that when a revolution takes place, a lot of destruction would be involved."

Dr. Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, Catholic archbishop of Lagos, expressed dismay that Obasanjo had not been able to tame corruption as he pledged when he took over from the military government. He described corruption as "a canker-worm eating into the fabric of the society."

In the same vein, Anglican bishops say the Nigerian government has deliberately shied away from fighting fraud in high places because the political leadership itself is corrupt.

The Rev. Emmanuel Kana Mani, Anglican bishop of Maiduguri, in northern Nigeria, said: "There have been alarming reports of large-scale stealing of public funds by people in high places, looting of public treasury, extortion of public contracts and bribery."

Yet, he said, "no serious attempt has been made to bring to book the so called leaders who have benefited from the ill-gotten gains, many of whom stashed the money in other countries."

In April, the office of the auditor-general released a report accusing the present government of financial recklessness, plundering of the national wealth and corruption in all sectors of the economy.

Christian leaders denounce plan to impeach Nigeria's president

Obed Minchakpu

ABUJA, Nigeria, (ENI) — Christian leaders have denounced calls from the Nigerian parliament for the impeachment of President Olusegun Obasanjo, warning that it could derail democracy in the country.

The executive of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the country's main ecumenical body, representing Protestant, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, on September 25 called on the nation's legislators to halt moves to impeach the president.

Distraction from the reality

"This executive calls on the House of Representatives [the lower chamber of the national legislature] to stop every attempt to impeach the president because it is our belief that this is a distraction from the reality of this nation, especially as we are moving forward and preparing for the next elections," said CAN in a statement following a meeting in Kaduna, in northern Nigeria.

Nigerian local, state and national elections are scheduled for early next year.

At a news conference, the Rev. Sunday Mbang, CAN national chairman, said: "We ask the members of the legislature to allow this country a good environment of peace and stability to enable the people for the next elections."

In August, Nigeria's House of Representatives gave Obasanjo two weeks to resign or face impeachment, accusing the presidency of demonstrating "monumental inadequacies, ineptitude, persistent disregard for the rule of law and obvious corruption."

Refused to resign

Obasanjo refused to resign, saying the accusations against him were made with malicious intent.

In a 17-page rebuttal, Tunji Oseni, the presidential spokesman, called the claims made by the legislators "vexatious, malicious, mischievous, uncalled for, unconstitutional and therefore rejected outright as it was done in bad faith."

The constitution provides for presidential impeachment if the "president is guilty of gross misconduct in the performance of the functions of his office." It requires a two-thirds majority of the upper and lower chambers of the national assembly.

Agabi warned that Nigeria was at a crucial point in its transition to a sustainable democracy, and that impeachment could bring about the disintegration of the country.

Joseph Akinfenwa, Anglican bishop in Ibadan province and the church spokesman, said: "As of today, the general public is dissatisfied with the performance of the legislators. They are being seen as [confused and] prepared to go to any length to destabilize the country."

Catholic Archbishop John Onaiyekan of Abuja noted: "Our conviction is that the paramount task before the nation right now is to work for a free, fair and peaceful election come 2003. It is then that Nigerians would be given the opportunity to assess all elected office holders."

Nigeria's Baptist Convention said that "rather than resort to blackmail, the lawmakers should make efforts to find ways to work in harmony with the president through dialogue."

The Rev. Ademola Ishola, general secretary of the Baptist Convention, told ENI: "It is important that the lawmakers wait and leave the voters to use their voting power to unseat either the president or they [the legislators] themselves."

Nigerian Christian leaders say voter registration rigged

Obed Minchakpu

ABUJA, Nigeria (ENI) — Nigerian Christian leaders have decried as "fraudulent" a national voters' registration drive that ended last month in preparation for next year's scheduled general elections.

The church leaders charge that the voter registration drive carried out over a 10-day period was hijacked by politicians, who in some states bought registration cards from electoral officers, disenfranchising Christians, who make up an estimated 40 per cent of the country's population.

Christians in the northwestern state of Zamfara were denied the right to register as voters, the Rev. Linus Awuhe, chairman of the state's chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), told ENI in Gusau, the state capital. "Electoral registration materials were diverted and given only to Muslims in the state, including under-age children, for the purpose of rigging the forthcoming elections in the country. Yet eligible Christian voters were denied the opportunity to register," he told ENI.

Massive registration fraud by politicians

The Rev. Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, speaking for Nigeria's Catholic Church, said reports revealed massive registration fraud by politicians. He explained that politicians bought voters' cards, and in some cases, used thugs to attack electoral officers and steal electoral materials.

"Unless INEC [Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission] puts its house in order and the government sanitises the political arena, the country may be heading for a precipice," warned Okogie.

Shem Zugbayi, deputy governor of the state of Niger in central Nigeria, told ENI in Minna, the state capital, that 400,000 voters in Niger had been disenfranchised because of fraudulent practices.

Gidado Abubakar, INEC's resident commissioner in the state of Kaduna, in northern Nigeria, said that "the resort to the buying of voters' cards by politicians is a strategy aimed at rigging next year's elections in the country".

He told ENI that Kaduna had received 2.3 million voters' cards for its population of 3.2 million, but that most of the cards had been diverted and sold to politicians.

The irregularities appeared to be widespread, with cases of political intimidation and the buying of voters' cards reported throughout the country.

An estimated 50 per cent of Nigeria's 126 million people are Muslims. The country only embraced democratic governance three years ago after more than three decades of military rule. Presidential and legislative elections are scheduled for early next year.

Church

Karachi gunmen murder Pakistani welfare workers

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) — Armed gunmen attacked a Pakistani Christian welfare organization in Karachi Sept. 25, then escaped after killing seven Christians and leaving an eighth critically injured.

According to local police, two unidentified attackers entered the third-floor offices of the Idare-e-Amn-O-Insaf, or Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), in central Karachi shortly after working hours began in earyl October. The assailants apparently gagged all the office staff and tied them to chairs before shooting eight of them point-blank in the head.

Six of the victims died on the spot, while a seventh died later in the hospital and an eighth is still fighting for his life. An additional office worker who was beaten and tied up was not shot, however, enabling him to wriggle free a half-hour later to summon the police.

A doctor working next door to the unmarked IPJ offices at the time of the attack told Reuters news agency that he had seen two gunmen. "They were wearing shirts and trousers and were clean-shaven," he said.

By late morning, hundreds of police had cordoned off the 12-storey Rimpa Plaza building where the attack took place along Jinnah Road, in the southern port city's central business district.

Although the shooting was Karachi's first attack against a Christian institution this year, suicide and car bomb attacks against Western targets there in May and June killed 11 foreigners and 16 Pakistanis.

Christian staff killed

The dead were all Christians on the IPJ staff. According to doctors the eighth man needed surgery and faced permanent paralysis of the left side from his injuries.

Meanwhile, the ninth office worker reportedly fainted shortly after police began interrogating him. Local Christian sources told Compass that he has been put under arrest as a possible suspect in the crime.

Founded in 1973, the IPJ has focused for three decades on obtaining labor rights for textile and city workers, along with representing other human rights issues for the poorest sectors of society. Jointly sponsored by Pakistan's Catholic and Protestant churches, the group has not been involved in religious politics.

According to police sources, however, a recent issue of the organization's magazine, *Jafakash* (Hard Worker), had dealt with Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws.

The attack shattered recent claims by the Pakistan government that last month's massive crackdown had "smashed" the militant terrorist groups assaulting Christian and Western targets in the country.

Security stepped up

Only a day earlier, Pakistan's Interior Ministry stepped up security safeguards around Christian sites after admitting that police had uncovered new evidence of future attacks planned against non-Muslim places of worship and foreign establishments.

Police investigators confirmed that militants of the Harakat ul-Mujahideen Al-Almi group recently arrested in Karachi with weapons and explosives had in their possession maps and plans for at least two churches and a Christian school. Entry and exit points for the institutions' facilities, all located in central Karachi, were marked on the maps, police said.

In Karachi and a number of other cities, local police removed signs identifying churches meeting in private homes and began fortifying other Christian institutions with sandbag bunkers. "We are removing the signs for their own safety," a police officer in Rawalpindi told the Associated Press.

This shooting was the fifth deadly assault on Christians in Pakistan since last October, when militant Islamist groups vowed to retaliate against President Pervaiz Musharraf's decision to support the U.S. war on terrorism. The toll from the string of anti-Christian attacks now comes to 39 killed and 75 injured.

Fifteen Christian worshipers and a policeman were massacred during an October 2001 worship service in Bahawalpur, with five more killed in a March grenade attack at the Islamabad Protestant Church. Another 11 died in separate attacks in early August against the Murree Christian School and the Taxila Christian Hospital, both in the northern Punjab near Islamabad.

The Bible and war

Tony Campolo

The great theologian Karl Barth once said that we should read with the Bible in one hand, while holding the newspaper in the other. According to Barth, we should always be relating the Bible to the events of the day. Seldom has this advice been more relevant than today. Yet, with talk of war constantly being reported in the headlines these days, there has been little in the way of relating what the Bible says about all this talk.

Scriptural solutions

We should ask the question posted by those omnipresent WWJD lapel pins, "What Would Jesus Do?" There are those who answer that question by simply quoting Jesus as they affirm their option of becoming conscientious objectors. "After all," they point out, "didn't Jesus say that the children of God are to be peace makers? (Matt.5: 9) Didn't he tell us to love our enemies and do good to those who would harm us? (Matt.5: .44) And didn't he warn us that those who live by the sword will die by the sword? (Matt.26: 52) Doesn't a simple reading of the Sermon on the Mount preclude violence as a way for us who follow Jesus to deal with threats to our well being?"

What if, instead of an embargo on Iraq, which over the past decade has contributed to the deaths of a half million children, we had followed the teachings of Scripture and fed our enemies when they were hungry, clothed them when they were naked, and sent them medicines when they were sick? (Rom. 12: 20) Might not then the people of Iraq view us differently, and even see that their own well being was tied up with our well being?

It is not just Mennonites and members of the church of the Brethren who ask such questions. Mahatma Gandhi once said that Christians are the only people in the world who fail to understand that Jesus taught non-violent resistance to evil. But even pacifists have doubts about whether or not a non-violent response to evil is always the right thing. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the World War II martyr, was into being a pacifist until confronted with the monstrosity of Hitler's evil. Then he said, "If one sees a madman driving a car into a crowd of innocent people, one should do *anything* necessary to stop him."

Those Christians who join with President Bush in pursuing the war option are likely to go to the teachings of St. Augustine who outlined the conditions of The Just War Theory. Among the criteria laid down by Augustine for a war to be justified are these:

- All other options for resolving the conflict must have been exhausted;
- The good achieved by the war must outweigh its evil consequences;
- There should be an avoidance of civilian casualties.

When it comes to civilians being killed in this upcoming war, we must consider that in the Civil War five per cent of the casualties were civilians; in WWI, 30 per cent of the casualties were civilians; and in WWII, 60 per cent of the casualties were civilians. Have we any reason to believe that in a future war this pattern of an increase of civilian victims would be reversed?

Finally, we must ask if the good that might be achieved will outweigh the evil the war will cause. Would a war with Iraq unify the Muslim world against the West? Might it set off a religious war of Muslims against Jews and Christians, as Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington suggests? Might it make the resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict impossible? And might it not increase exponentially the threats of terrorism?

There are no easy answers to such questions. But these are questions that must be answered if we are to justify the war that now looms before us. Each of us must, according to scripture, work out his or her own salvation on these matters, and we must do so with "fear and trembling" (Phil. 2: 12).

Tony Campolo teaches at Eastern University in St. David's, Penn. His website address is: **www.tonycampolo.com**

Muslim, Christian leaders in Nigeria divided on Sharia law

Obed Minchakpu

ABUJA, Nigeria (ENI) — Christian and Muslim leaders who have met to discuss religious tension in Nigeria remain sharply divided on the strict Islamic Sharia law that has been implemented in 12 Nigerian states.

At a sometimes touchy meeting of Nigeria's Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) in early October, Christian leaders told their Muslim counterparts that the Sharia laws, which call for punishments such as stoning, amputation of hands and floggings for certain offences, were not right for Christians.

"All of us had agreed here that Muslims in this country cannot be prevented from practising their religion. This, we all agreed, was not to be extended to non-Muslims," said Sunday Mbang, co-chairman of the council, at the meeting that gathered 25 Christian and 25 Muslim leaders.

Since 2000, 12 Muslim-majority states in Nigeria have decided to implement the strict code, but to apply it only to Muslims. Nigeria's population of some 126 million people is roughly divided between Christians and Muslims, with Islam more prominent in the north of the country.

The inter-religious council met in an attempt to find a solution to ongoing religious tensions between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

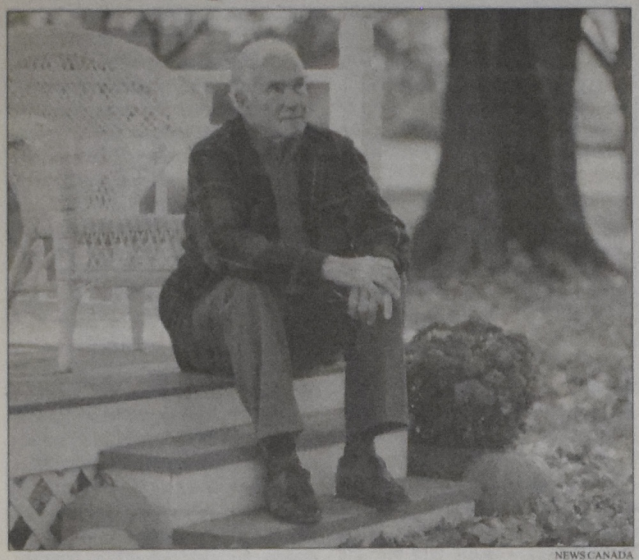
Religious conflicts have escalated recently, claiming the lives of thousands of people over the past three years and destroying millions of dollars worth of property.

Mbang, who is also president of the World Methodist Council and leader of the Nigerian Methodist Church said, "All of us must endeavor to work for peace in our country; our two religions, Christianity and Islam, encourage their adherents to have peace and radiate that peace to others."

Muslim leaders for their part accused Christians of being intolerant, and threatened to walk out of the council. However, although accusations flew, the religious leaders resolved to continue to work for peaceful co-existence in the country.

Aging/Agriculture

Does your loved one need a nursing home?



NEWS CANADA

Lisa M. Petsche

The average age at admission of nursing home residents is 82 years. Two-thirds are admitted from a hospital or another facility, while the rest are admitted from home. Of those who come from home, approximately 60 per cent have been living with family members. The majority are widowed.

The most common medical diagnosis of older adults admitted to nursing homes is stroke. This is followed by Alzheimer's disease, hip fracture, heart or circulatory condition other than stroke, and non-Alzheimer's dementia.

If you are caring for a frail parent or other relative, you may reach a point where you wonder if his or her needs might be better met in a nursing facility.

Explore what's available

Before you consider this route, though, be sure you have explored what's available in terms of community support services. These might include: in-home programs that provide medical care, personal care or various kinds of therapeutic services, such as physical therapy and social work; adult day programs; meal programs; recreational programs; friendly visiting services; respite programs; and home adaptation subsidies or grants. Caregiver support groups can also be beneficial, especially if you're feeling stressed or isolated.

If your relative has become deconditioned due to increasing immobility, discuss with his or her family doctor whether referral to an inpatient or outpatient rehabilitation program might be appropriate. This can increase his or her independence, but first it must be determined if there is potential for improvement. Your loved one must also have a certain level of mental functioning in order to be able to concentrate on tasks, follow instructions and retain new information.

To find out about local resources, call your area's Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), which provides single-point access to information, co-ordinated health care and support services to assist people to live independently in the community. (They also provide information and assistance to anyone considering a move to a long-term care facility or chronic hospital.) Another good resource is the local chapter of the group that's specific to your loved one's diagnosis, such as the Alzheimer Society or the Parkinson Society.

Even if community resources are in place, however, the time may come when they are no longer enough.

Following are the most common reasons for admission to a nursing home.

Care recipient issues:

• Need for assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) — include bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, feeding — because of physical limitations or mental impairment.

• Incontinence of bladder and/or bowel.

• Need for assistance with transferring from one surface to another — for example, moving from bed to chair or wheelchair. (If the caregiver is already providing assistance, the turning point is usually the need for assistance from two people or for a mechanical lifter.)

• Need for skilled nursing beyond what community home care services can provide — for example, if there are major pressure sores or other wounds that require frequent dressing changes and ongoing assessment.

• Need for close medical monitoring and frequent intervention due to fluctuating medical status — for example, if the person has a history of recurrent pneumonia.

• Health problems associated with poor nutrition — weight loss, dehydration or slow healing of wounds, for instance.

• Safety concerns: forgetting to use safety equipment such as a walker; frequent falls; accidents with appliances or cigarettes.

• Behavioral concerns: wandering away from home and getting lost; suspiciousness; refusal of care or medications; strange behaviors such as trying to ingest inedible substances (also a safety issue) or eliminating inappropriately (in corners of rooms, for example, rather than on the toilet); verbal or physical aggression.

• Repeated emergency room visits or hospital admissions.

Caregiver issues:

• Chronic sleep deprivation owing to regular provision of care during the night — usually for toileting or medication administration, or because the care recipient has their days and nights reversed.

• Physical health concerns: chronic exhaustion; stress-related conditions such as ulcers, insomnia or frequent infections; chronic health conditions — such as arthritis or osteoporosis — that limit the ability to provide hands-on care; injury sustained during care; acute illness requiring hospitalization; need for surgery followed by a period of convalescence or rehabilitation. (In the latter two cases, residential placement might be a temporary measure.)

• Mental health concerns, namely ongoing anxiety, fear or depression. Social isolation can contribute to feelings of aloneness ("No one understands what I'm going through") and hopelessness ("There's nothing to look forward to anymore" or "I feel trapped and there's no way out").

• Inability to meet co-existing obligations, such as to other family members or an employer.

• A major life crisis such as marital separation, illness of another loved one, or a death in the family.

Other key issues:

• Inability to afford the cost of needed in-home help, medical supplies and equipment, or home renovations.

• Family conflict regarding caregiving issues.

A personal decision

It's important to keep in mind that the decision to place a loved one in a care facility is a personal one. That is, what one caregiver might consider manageable, another might not. Coping ability depends on numerous factors, including the relationship history between the caregiver and care recipient, as well as the caregiver's personality, coping style and prior lifestyle, the physical accessibility of their home, and the amount of practical assistance and emotional support they're receiving.

Every caregiver has their own

Continued on page 11...

Drought, a tragic upheaval

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE

I talked for a long time with an old friend, Will, last night. He has sold all but 25 of his 250-cow herd. Sixty-five promising heifers also had to go and at a sacrifice price. The $700.00 per head cost to get each cow through the winter would be impossible.

Will had done his combining the day before — all of it. The harvest didn't even fill his truck. No grass. Next to no hay or grain. No straw. Big mortgage, though, with an annual payment installment coming up.

It was in his voice

There was very little said about discouragement, but it was in Will's voice. And he kept coming back to the wonder of how this could happen. No one recalls such widespread agricultural disaster in central Alberta.

A few days earlier I bought a flock of sheep from Bill, who no longer has hay or pasture to feed them. He had purchased his foundation breeding stock from me a few years ago, so I knew what I was buying. By the way, I bought stock when most are selling because my son, who is taking over the farm, is proceeding on the premise that next year will be more normal.

Bill had purchased 35 cow-calf pairs this spring to add to his herd because a good snow winter indicated the drought must be over. Because the drought only worsened, he will have to dispose of most of those animals this fall for considerably less than he paid. "I feel sorry," Bill said, "for any farmer who does not have an off-farm job."

While I readied my truck to haul Bill's sheep home, I listened to a CBC interview with 4-H club members from the center of the drought area. They bravely talked through emotion-choked throats about the bleakness of the landscape, the loss of herds that took decades to build, of parents who are in serious conflict — the mother wanting to move to town, the father paralyzed by lost hope and purpose. 4-H members are usually some of the most enthusiastic and prepared future farmers of Canada. But these young people were thoroughly disillusioned about the prospects for farming.

Will has reluctantly agreed to be a "crop adjuster," which means verifying the losses of others for insurance payout. So along with his own grief he is weighed down daily by the frustrations, anger and depression of many others in the same predicament.

A test of faith

Though Will's faith is strong, it is being tested. He finds also that the people he visits are wondering about the "whys and the wherefores." He is dismayed at the cursing of many, the blaming of God for it all. Others are talking openly as never before about looking to a "higher power."

We are losing not only future farmers and community-builders, but also seasoned and proven experts in the everyday business of survival in farming. Will has a Masters degree in agricultural economics and has taught at the college level while farming. Bill has received an award for excellent conservation practices on his ranch. He is a county councilor.

What an upheaval! What will be the fall-out?

Vern Gleddie has a sheep ranch near Edmonton, Alta.

Serving the differently-abled

Maggie Delaney

Genetic characteristics, mindful and heartfelt thoughts, the ability to share gifts and talents – all these and more write each person's life story. And how we perceive the world and life is impacted by our physical appearance, spiritual understanding, and guidance in Christian faith. We each have our own dreams and goals, and each of us follows a unique path toward their fulfilment. Somewhere along this route each of us experiences disability. At some stage in our lives, disability is actually normal.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND INC

Helen Keller said: "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

An Inclusion Ministry

The church where I am a member has an Inclusion Ministry that began when four residents of an area group home walked into a Sunday morning service and sat down in the back pew. When these men began attending worship regularly, our senior minister began teaching them about baptism, and a long-time member of the congregation started a Sunday school class for them. Eventually, the church hired a Minister of Community Development for the Inclusion Ministry.

We learned to think in terms of the four A's: accessibility, adaptability, affordability, and accommodations. The church invested in large print Bibles and hymnals, installed an elevator, put in a ramp leading to the fellowship hall entrance, and purchased a large projection screen and sound system, making the building more accessible and inviting for all.

From its beginning, I have considered myself a member of the Inclusion Ministry, as I was born with a visual impairment and injured left arm. I soon began to write a bi-weekly column for our church newsletter to inform the congregation of the many gifts and talents possessed by the differently-abled. I now serve as a Sunday school teacher, co-ordinate and publicize activities, and as a role model I provide support and guidance for participants in this ministry.

The Inclusion Ministry at our church demonstrates how we all can serve God by sharing our gifts and talents. For example: Jim leads hymns during Sunday school; Tony and Gary collect the Sunday school offering; Ron plays the piano for many church-related activities; Gary, Paul, and Steve lead us in prayer during class; Donna, Susan, and Janisse serve as greeters before worship; Paul shares personal testimonies; Ron, Scott, and Paul read Scripture in Sunday school and church; Karen, Scott, Marc, Wilberta, and Stacie brighten our days with their beaming smiles, handshakes, and warm hugs. Several members serve as helpers during the worship service.

Members of the congregation not only participate in the Sunday school class, they also support the ministry with their monetary gifts, dedicate time and service for activities, and volunteer to drive the church van. Our church's efforts have been recognized by the community with awards from the Inclusion Network of Greater Cincinnati and Christian Church Homes of Kentucky.

Helen Keller said: "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." We as a congregation are learning to accept and appreciate one another as we are. Our inclusion members are showing us the way as they express their love for Jesus Christ.

My work with our Inclusion Ministry has led me to seek information about other similar programs. I have found two ministries which have given me ideas which we might develop within our own ministry at MACC.

Clients are 'treasures'

Quiet Waters Outreach (QWO) is an innovative, Christ-centered, non-profit, non-denominational organization in Portland, Oregon serving people with developmental disabilities age 10 to seniors. Executive Director, Steve Ristow, who formed the corporation in May 1997, refers to its clients as "Treasures."

Lebanon Baptist Church of Covington, Tennessee ministers to children and teens with various disabilities, particularly those with autism. Church members assist these children, showing the love of God through acceptance, understanding and support. Lebanon Baptist Church incorporated the name *Shepherd Boy* in their mission statement with the story of David in mind. Robyne Batson, who is the mother of an autistic child and an active participant in the ministry, explains the "Shepherd Boy" concept: "David was God's choice for the next King of Israel. So, when others see a Shepherd Boy, God may see a King.... When others see an autistic child, no one sees the possibilities that God sees.

Does your loved one need a nursing home?

... continued from page 10

bottom line; for some it might be when incontinence begins, for others it might be when safety issues arise. Still others might persevere as long as their relative is able to recognize them and their surroundings.

Rest assured that acknowledging your physical and emotional limits as a caregiver is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of wisdom and concern for your loved one's best interests. If you decide to pursue placement in a nursing facility, remind yourself that your relative is benefiting from around-the-clock professional care, therapeutic programming and the companionship of people in their own age group.

Take comfort, too, in knowing that nursing home placement does not diminish your importance in your loved one's life. It just means a change in focus.

With the demanding responsibility of hands-on caregiving lifted, you can shift your energy to meeting your relative's emotional and spiritual needs and enjoying your time together. You also have the option of bringing him or her home for visits, either regularly or for special occasions.

Lisa M. Petsche is a geriatric social worker and freelance writer.

Finding freedom in failure

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

Tears are running down her face as she tells me about her pregnancy — a child not fathered by her husband. How is she going to tell him her impulsive behavior a few months ago will leave life-long consequences?

His face is chalk white as he tells me how his reckless driving caused the death of an elderly gentleman. How can he begin to live with what he has done?

Both of them look gaunt and withdrawn. They know their marriage is over. How can they tell their children, family and friends?

Failure is part of the human condition

Failure in this broken world is unavoidable. Admitting it and living with it, however, is difficult. Especially for those of us who have been raised in Christian homes. We thrive at trying to get it right. We avoid mistakes like the plague. We are afraid of them because we think they are irreversible. We frown at those who step out of this prescribed "norm." If failures do occur, we zero in on the spilled milk but not on the big picture.

Children, on the other hand, need to know they have the freedom to fail. Home needs to be a training ground for learning there are consequences to failures. Young children's mistakes are usually minor, causing equally minor consequences. Adult failures, on the other hand, often lead to adult consequences.

Acknowledging, learning from failures

Our first reaction to failure is to cover it up. Remember Adam and Eve in the garden? Furthermore, many of us, when we make a mistake stubbornly plow ahead and end up repeating the same errors. We believe in the motto "Try and try again." but it may be more helpful to "Try, then stop and think. And try again."

Acknowledging our failures is rarely easy. It forces us to see ourselves in the clear light of day. And what we see does not make us happy. Yet, William Saroyan once wrote: "Good people are good because they have come to wisdom through failure. We get very little wisdom from success."

Accepting failure allows for brokenness

If we move through failure in a healthy way it can become a good opportunity to get to know who we really are. Alan E. Nelson in his book *Embracing Brokenness* writes that when a person is truly broken, he or she becomes authentic. In the experience of our brokenness we become honest with our failures and with our faith.

On the other hand, how many of us do not buck brokenness. And through the process we end up broken in our will to live, in our emotions, in our self-image, in our finances and in our relationships. As a result, we are angry, bitter, and hateful, and we age as empty shells of what we used to be. God does not want us broken in these ways.

Brokenness an experience of the heart

I will never forget an Ann Landers column years ago in which a father wrote of the joy of having a son who was conceived through his wife's infidelity when their marriage was crumbling and how they picked up the pieces and allowed the blessings of the big picture to enrich their lives.

Even though Alan Nelson wrote a book about brokenness, it cannot be taught. It needs to be an experience of the heart. I believe the road to accepting our human frailty often leads through the land of failure. When we fail miserably in our lives, we can begin to understand the depth of our need for the grace of God. Healthy brokenness allows us to drop our emotional and spiritual guard and makes room for the working of the Spirit. It allows us the opportunity to become better (more real) rather than bitter.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

Poverty/News

Working hard but still unable to get by

Abe Huyser-Honig

In a recent lecture at Calvin College, Barbara Ehrenreich, an award-winning political essayist (her work has appeared in such publications as *Time* and *The Atlantic Monthly*) and author of the best-selling *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*, challenged middle-class assumptions about gender, class, and work ethics.

METROACTIVE.COM

Barbara Ehrenreich

"What would the Bush Administration do about poverty — bomb it?" quipped Ehrenreich.

When a U.S. Welfare Reform act passed in 1996, cutting off state aid to single mothers and forcing them to join the workforce, Ehrenreich wondered how they would manage. *Nickel and Dimed* is the memoir of the subsequent year she spent finding out for herself by working in Key West, Portland (ME), and the Twin Cities as a waitress, Wal-Mart employee, hotel maid, nursing home maid, and house-cleaner.

Her experience refutes the American myth that poor people "just need to get a job," she said. Working full time earning $7/hr, well above minimum wage, Ehrenreich was hard-pressed to cover the basic necessities of food, gas, and rent. Some of her co-workers were even worse off, weighted with the additional financial burden of childcare, or with no place to sleep but their cars. "I don't think there's a problem with work ethic in this country," Ehrenreich said. "I think the problem is with employers who don't pay enough."

The greatest obstacle

Finding affordable housing proved to be the greatest obstacle. In Key West, the $625/ month she paid to live in a trailer left her with only $200 to cover all the rest of her monthly expenses, and in Minnesota her weekly bill for a residential motel without curtains or such basic appliances as a microwave or mini-fridge was greater than her paycheque.

Ehrenreich noted that while U.S. statistics show about 11 per cent of the population living below the poverty line, they rely on an outdated formula (three times a family's food expenses) that doesn't take into account the significant inflation of housing costs in the last several decades. She said a more accurate figure would be nearly 30 per cent.

Physically and mentally challenging

Despite the minimal pay, Ehrenreich found the jobs to be both physically and mentally challenging. At Wal-Mart, for instance, she had to memorize the exact locations of hundreds of products so that she could reshelve them when customers removed them from the racks, and these locations were often rotated several times a week. "I will never again use the word 'unskilled' to describe any job," she said.

Ehrenreich decried the "atmosphere of distrust and intimidation" that she found in workplaces. At Wal-Mart she and the other employees were not allowed to make any small talk with one another, and in her housecleaning job employees were prohibited from drinking water at houses that took up to four hours to clean. In subsequent research, she found that women in many manufacturing jobs wear diapers to work because bathroom breaks are allowed so infrequently — sometimes only every six hours.

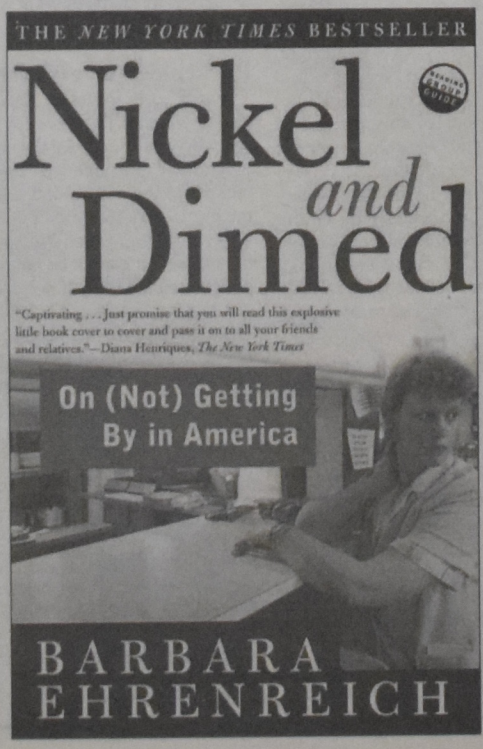
Ehrenreich said her blue- collar experience illustrated the growing polarization between, on the one hand, the middle and upper classes and, on the other, the working class, "no matter how many stickers say 'United We Stand.'" About one per cent of households in the U.S. hold 40 per cent of the wealth, she said, while the wealth controlled by the bottom 20 per cent is negligible. It would have taken her 1,000 years of work at the rate she was paid at Wal-Mart to earn what some CEOs earn in one year ($10 million). The lack of upper class participation in public education, public transportation, and public parks for vacationing makes the rift social as well as economic, she said.

Steps toward reversing the situation include stopping employers from illegally firing people because of union activities (something that happens 10,000 times a year in the U.S., according to the AFL-CIO), and stopping the decline in affordable housing, said Ehrenreich. "Our largest public housing project is now the penitentiary system," she noted. She proposed that the government provide universal health insurance, subsidized child care, and a system of cash support for the people, especially women, who are engaged in the very important full-time job of caring for small children and aging parents.

Unfortunately, Ehrenreich lamented, resources that could fund these programs are instead "drained away by military spending." Criticizing the threat of war with Iraq as a ploy to distract citizens from domestic issues, she quipped, "What would the Bush Administration do about poverty — bomb it?"

Erhenreich urged audience members to get involved by voting in local elections, working with local nonprofits, and supporting nationwide groups like Students Against Sweatshops. She also urged college students to show solidarity with college employees like janitors and food service workers.

"If you choose to do nothing, if you are a person of affluence," Ehrenreich concluded, "you will have to live with the revelation that our low wage workers need to be considered our major philanthropists. Most of the things we take for granted are only made possible by the work of these tired, underpaid people."


THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
Nickel and Dimed
"Captivating . . . Just promise that you will read this explosive little book cover to cover and pass it on to all your friends and relatives."—Diana Henriques, The New York Times
On (Not) Getting By in America
BARBARA EHRENREICH

Calvin Theological Seminary installs new president

Bert Witvoet

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Cornelius Plantinga Jr. has become the sixth president of Calvin Theological Seminary, the main training centre for pastors in the Christian Reformed Church of North America. His installation took place on September 27 in the Fine Arts Center Auditorium of Calvin College.

In the morning, recently completed new additions to the seminary were dedicated in a brief ceremony, and in the afternoon two lectures celebrating the inauguration of Cornelius Plantinga were given by two brothers of the new president.

Dr. Alvin Plantinga, professor of philosophy and director of the Center for Philosophy and Religion at Yale, and touted to be the foremost Christian philosopher of our time, spoke on the topic "Against Materialism." His brother, Dr. Leon Plantinga Professor of Music at Yale University, followed that up with a lecture and concert on "Schumann in the 1830s."

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Rev. Dr. Cornelius Plantinga Jr.

'Unless a grain of wheat falls...'

The inauguration ceremony took on a festive and esthetically pleasing character as hundreds of congregants sang hymns to the Lord accompanied by organ, piano, brass and choir. Sheaves of wheat were brought into the auditorium, and a beautifully designed banner created by George Langbroek of St. Catharines, Ont., hung from the ceiling — all to emphasize the theme chosen for this president's inauguration: "Unless a grain of wheat falls...."

The installation itself was conducted by Peter M. Jonker, pastor of Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church, which holds the credentials of Dr. Plantinga, elder Carol F. Smith, and Norman L. Meyer, President of the seminary's board of trustees.

Towards the end of the ceremony, Plantinga preached a sermon on the text taken from John 12:24: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Having done a bit of belated research on agriculture, Plantinga pointed out that even with modern technology, wheat goes into the ground one seed at a time, and lies dormant until one day tiny shoots seek water and nutrients in the soil and a stalk shoots up to the surface to look for the sun. According to farmer he talked to, two bushels of wheat per acre will produce between 40 to 50 bushels of wheat. This yield can only happen after seeds fall into the ground and die.

Plantinga acknowledged the fact that he, too, would have to die in order to bring about much fruit. Jesus wants his followers to die to their pride, their arrogance, their complacency and their critical spirits, he added.

Calvin Theological Seminary has been in existence since 1876 and it educates about 280 men and women per year in six degree programs described as being "of a classical nature that are designed to equip students for contemporary ministry in a global context."

Plantinga graduated from Grand Rapids Christian High School, Calvin College and studied at Yale University on a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship. He earned a Ph.D. degree from Princeton Theological seminary in 1982. He has taught Systematic Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, and his most recent post was Dean of the Chapel at Calvin College.

Development News

Successful CRC businessman leaves it all

Ron De Boer

It's a long way from the corporate boardroom to the slave-release ceremony of a small village in Ghana. Yet, inside a year, that's where God has led John DenBok.

DenBok, 43, a member of Collingwood CRC, was blessed with a keen business mind and spent most of his adult life making money — lots of it. In 1987, he founded Thornbury-based Apple Valley Juice Corporation, which he built into the largest fresh juice company in Canada, supplying every grocery store in the nation with high-end juices under brands such as Tropicana, President's Choice, and Second Cup and creating its own company brands — Fruit Fix, FrootAura and Apple Valley.

With revenues of $8,000,000 a year and 43 employees under his sharp eye, DenBok should have felt on top of the corporate world. But he didn't. The more successful Apple Valley Juices became, the emptier DenBok began to feel about where God was leading him in his life.

In this day and age of corporate greed and scandal, John DenBok is indeed an anomaly. Instead of searching for ways to make more money, DenBok resigned as head of Apple Valley Juice, sold his share of the company and has severed himself completely from the business world — all to help free women and children in Ghana.

PHOTOS COURTESY JOHN DENBOK

Ghanaian children (above) who have been freed from voodooism by International Needs.

Shocked at spiritual depravity

Last October, DenBok became executive director of International Needs Canada and now spends much of his time gaining support and awareness for the work of International Needs ministries in the African country of Ghana. Earlier this year, he traveled to Ghana to witness first hand the work of International Needs Ghana and to see the travesties that deep-rooted Voodooism has caused in Ghana's villages. DenBok was shocked when he came face-to-face with the living conditions of a developing country, but his shock for the physical injustices paled in comparison to the emotions he would feel when he discovered how spiritually depraved the villagers were. "There was a darkness that hung over these villages," he said. "The devil is at work in Ghana." DenBok says he cried himself to sleep his first few nights in Ghana.

The devil to which DenBok is referring is the practice of Trokosi, whereby young virgin girls are offered to religious shrines as reparation for the sins of family members. If misfortune such as death or sickness falls on a family, a father might go to the village shrine and ask the priest what he has to do to stop the misfortune. The fetish priest might suggest that the father hand over his four-year-old daughter as reparation for the unpaid sins of family members. The father believes that once he has given over his daughter, the sins of the family will be forgiven and the gods will protect the family from sickness and death.

The fetish priests and shrine elders become the owners of these girls, putting them to work and subjecting them to persistent sexual abuse. When the girls are old enough, they become the "wives" of the fetish priest, and their offspring become the property of the shrine. The practice of Trokosi has been playing out in Ghana for five centuries, and even though the Ghanaian government outlawed the practice three years ago, belief in Voodooism runs so deeply in these villages, the practice continues today.

What motivates John DenBok when he attends release ceremonies of enslaved women and children are stories the likes of Guayo, a former Trokosi slave. Guayo, now 30, says she was very young when she was given to the religious shrine. She was not told why, and she quickly lost contact with her family. Sexually abused by the fetish priest from the age of 12, Guayo subsequently had four children. Unable to take care of herself or her babies — the fetish priests assume no responsibility for these "wives"— she often went without food or proper health care. She lived in shame, dread and despair. Now free, Guayo, like most other released women, has come to know Christ. But she cannot find a husband and she is feared and shunned by both her community and family, who believe she is owned by the gods. Like hundreds of others, Guayo has come under the care of International Needs.

Releasing women and girls from captivity

The goal of International Needs is simple: to convert fetish priests to Christ — the by-product of which is the release of women and girls from captivity — and discontinue the practice of Trokosi. They do this through what is called "Indigenous Ministry." International Needs is made up of church planters or evangelists of all ages and denominations to build relationships and educate other Ghanaian "nationals" within the villages. These Ghanaian nationals work on the fetish priests, bringing them to Christ and encouraging them to release the women and girls. When the women and girls are set free, much of the work of International Needs begins. Psychologists are brought in to work on emotional issues brought on by a lifetime of captivity and abuse. DenBok, who attended a release ceremony this spring, says the women have such little self-esteem and have been so severely abused, they can't even look anyone in the eye. International Needs has built a vocational school where women and children once held captive are housed in dorms and educated.

Reform must come from within

Walter Pimpong, the head of International Needs Ghana and himself a church planter in Ghana, believes indigenous ministries are successful in forging change in countries like Ghana. Not only are the Ghanaian nationals doing most of the work with the fetish priests, but when a vocational school is built, the labor and materials come from within the country. "Full responsibility for reform and spiritual growth must come from within for it to take root in these

Continued on page 16...

Ghanaian women (above) who have been freed from voodooism, and voodoo priests (right). Some priests have freed women even without becoming Christians themselves.

Why go to church? (6)

To read the caption under the picture

A.A. van Ruler

So far we have approached the question "Why go to church?" from the side of human existence. The point is to experience this existence to the full, we said. From the thought that this existence consists in stepping out and stepping across to stand before the face of the Creator we came to the theme of praise. We go to church, we said, to bring the work of praise to completion.

One-sided to begin with ourselves

It is, however, one-sided to begin with ourselves, with human existence. In our reflections on the significance of going to church we could just as well begin elsewhere — with the world. The world is the picture above the caption that we're talking about in this meditation. We also go to church to read that caption.

Taken by itself the world is only a picture without a caption. It is like a cartoon without words. There are people in the cartoon. They relate to one another in a certain way. Something is happening. But there is nothing to tell you what the joke is. You have to see that for yourself.

You are expected to look at the drawing until you get the joke. Once you catch on, it all seems quite clear, even obvious. But sometimes it takes awhile to get it.

This is also true of the world. It is simply there in all its reality. It is there in a thousand shapes and sizes. There are football players, physicists, jet pilots and potato farmers. We could go on to list millions more, adding social relationships, things from the area of culture, from history, nature and the cosmos.

You can't help but get the impression not only that all this is part of reality but also that it "represents" something. This can be taken in two senses: first, that it *means* something, and second, that it is *worth* something. I have in mind both senses of the word.

It certainly looks as though the varied reality of this big world represents something. It displays certain outlines; certain features stand out. The world is a picture.

Aching to get behind the meaning of it all

But it doesn't come with a title telling us what the picture represents. We have to guess at what it means. We have to study it till we see what it represents.

Everyone who is at all thoughtful or sensitive and who has a heart that is still beating will reflect on that picture of the world all his life long. Some indeed stare themselves blind on it. They ache to get behind the meaning of it all, to discover precisely what it represents, to catch on to the joke. There's nothing they'd like more than to come to clarity and insight; they'd love to have a good laugh at the joke.

But by no means does everyone come that far. Sometimes the picture of the world becomes dead to our gaze. Reality becomes a mysterious sphinx, an expressionless mask, a frightening monster. Even worse, the whole scene can become non-figurative. It may still have colors, lines and shapes, but it loses its power to represent. Then to ask what it means is to risk sounding foolish.

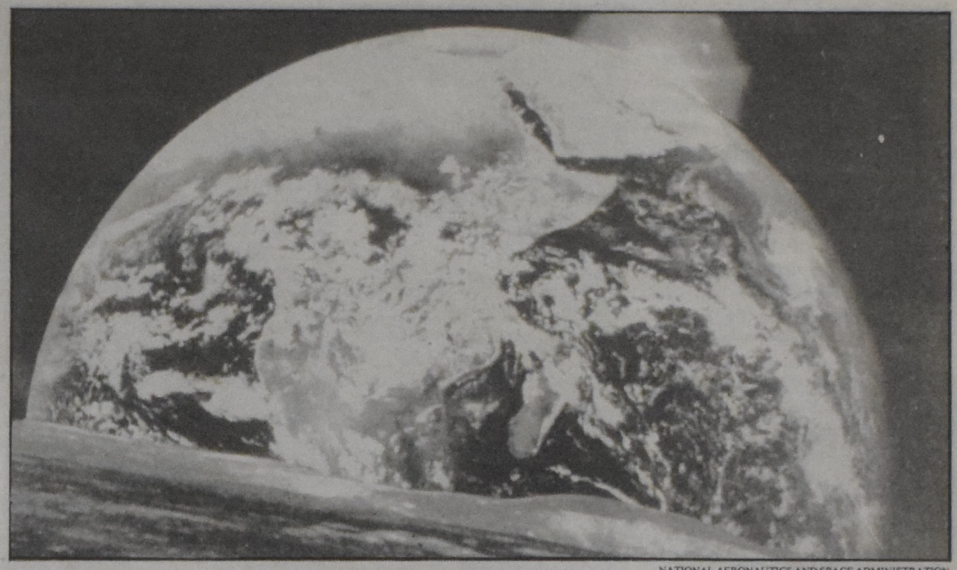
The abstract painter can't say what reality means either. He may claim to have penetrated into the essence of things, to where they have lost all form. Or he may claim to have expressed only himself and that this self is essentially inscrutable.

Giving meaning to the meaningless

In either case, the world no longer represents anything. It is no longer a picture, and there's no caption to go with it. Or one may add an arbitrary title that doesn't really correspond to anything, as sometimes happens in abstract art. Some philosophers speak of giving meaning to the meaningless. This is for them the essence of being human and of human culture and history – giving meaning to what in itself has no meaning.

For most philosophers, however, the world is still a picture and they think they understand it well enough to write a caption for it. That caption says what they think the world is and what it represents. It is their philosophical system.

This isn't just true of philosophies, however. The same can be said about all worldviews and religions, from the most primitive to the great religions of the world. They all presume to know more or less what it's all about and express it in their myths and rituals. They conceive of the world as a magical mystery, or as a divine process of becoming, or as a veil concealing nothingness, or as appearance, or as a stairway to the Supreme Being, or as the eternal recurrence of the same, or as a race toward the final abyss, or as an evolution to a free humanity, or as a necessary process toward the classless society, just to name a few captions.



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

The world is the picture above the caption that we're talking about in this meditation. We also go to church to read that caption.

The Christian religion has always had the biggest mouth in this respect. It has the highest pretensions. It is absolutely sure that the world isn't just real but also that it represents something, something very important. What is more, it claims to know what it is that it represents; in fact, it claims that its knowledge is infallible. This is so because it has received this knowledge by means of revelation (and is thus no ground for pride).

Here we must be careful with our words. Is the revelation to which the Christian faith appeals completely alongside the world? Can't the world itself also be called revelation in a certain sense? It's a picture, isn't it? It represents something; it points to something and shows it. Something in the world impresses itself on us. Something appears. In some sense, all of reality is a revelation.

We take note of this awesome reality when we distinguish, quite traditionally, between general and special revelation. Reality – the picture – is general revelation. Special revelation merely gives us a – very special and important – caption to put with the picture. It was given to Israel, the people God chose for this purpose. It was deepened and fixed in Jesus, who is the Christ. It was further unfolded in the tradition of the church – in the work of the Holy Spirit who was poured out on it and has indwelled it ever since.

A fact no one can deny

These are not just purely statements of faith. They contain a core of fact that can be ascertained by everyone. Jesus, Israel and the church have all understood and experienced the world in a unique way. That's a simple fact that no one can deny. Whether this way of seeing is true, however, is not something that can be demonstrated by any amount of argument.

But we can bring arguments in support. Doesn't what the Bible says about reality correspond to our experience? Don't we get the sense that it illuminates life and the world to their very foundations? Doesn't its way of life speak to the innermost parts of the human heart? To put it simply, isn't it a matter of love at first sight over toward him?

These are weighty arguments, as I see it. But they are hardly decisive. There has to be a spark. To speak with Pascal, it must suddenly become clear to one's heart. Even love at first sight involves a choice that cannot be wholly justified morally and rationally.

Special revelation

At any rate, the church fell in love with this God and calls this unique experience of reality, shared with Jesus and Israel, "special revelation." In light of this revelation, it thinks to understand the cartoon and to catch on to the joke. And on this basis it is able to write a caption for the picture, one that suddenly makes it clear what is going on in the picture.

What does the caption say? To spell that out completely would take a complete series in dogmatics, a "philosophy of revelation" (Herman Bavinck). We can hardly do that here. But we can sketch some highlights.

One very important word is "creation." On the basis of special revelation, the Christian church has always valued all of reality as willed, posited, upheld and ruled by God. That provides an unprecedented handle in deciphering the picture.

Another word, equally important, is "sin." Christianity traces all the perplexity and darkness in the world to human sin and God's wrath toward it.

This leads us to a third word – "redemption." There are: the exodus from Egypt, the covenant with Israel, the law, the prophets of Israel, the incarnation of the Word, the sacrifice to pay for our sins, the gift of the Spirit. By all this we have been redeemed, we will be redeemed and will be shown to be redeemed.

Then comes the world "kingdom." The world is the kingdom of God. We may speak of the realm of nature, the realm of grace and the realm of glory, but they are all part of the world, what it is there for. In a word, the caption says that reality exists to serve and praise God. It is there for his glory.

Special revelation is several different things at the same time. First of all, it is *word*. As such it is true doctrine: it teaches us and gives us clarity, telling us what things are and what they will become. There are commandments, which point us to the right path through the desert or the dark woods of the world. There are promises, which tell us that things are not going to remain the way they are now, namely, terrible. In this sense, special revelation gives us pure and true

categories by which to understand the world. They are given to us so that the gigantic task of creating those categories is not left to us alone. They are given to us above all so that we may live into these categories with the act of our existence (Kierkegaard). We have been told what things are, and that's how we must uphold them and direct our lives by them, inwardly and outwardly.

But special revelation is not just word. It is also *fact*, historical reality. This and that happened to Israel and in Christ. Because of these events, the face of being has been altered. The darkness, blindness, stubbornness that have encrusted it are removed. Revelation is more than enlightenment; it is also liberation, being led out of the house of bondage (to demons), being freed (from all forms of decay).

It is, then, much more than a caption, for it drastically changes the picture. The picture is really a painting that has become covered with grit and dust. And it has also been damaged here and there. The dirt is removed and the damaged places repaired, and the entire painting restored to its original beauty.

Religion seeks liberation of reality

Special revelation is more than the solution to a puzzle; it is not just an answer to an intellectual problem. The object of redemption is reality. Religion is more than philosophy, which only seeks to solve problems of thought. Philosophy rests, resigns itself, when it knows the wherefore of things. Religion is concerned with reality as such. It seeks the liberation of reality. When this has been found, it also comes to rest, but it does not resign itself to how things are; at rest, it looks forward in expectation.

When we have let all these reflections sink in, we can go on to our statement that we also go to church to read the caption beneath the picture.

The worship service isn't special revelation itself. The latter happened in Israel and in Christ. It is put down in Scripture. But the worship service does give us a chance to participate in revelation. It puts us in the force-field of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit mediates revelation and adapts it to us. This is still part of the history of revelation. In this sense, revelation is not yet finished. We can still speak of an ongoing revelation. And in this, the worship service plays an essential and even central role.

Seen from this perspective, what are we doing in church? In all simplicity, we may answer, "We are reading the caption written below the picture of the world by special revelation." In church we are told what it all really is, what we are seeing, experiencing, and doing, what is happening to us and about us. We not only listen to these things being told, we also repeat them. We learn the ABCs of reality. We spell out the caption letter by letter so that we can read it ourselves and recite it.

These are the "big words" that reverberate under the arches of age-old cathedrals and tin-roofed churches. They also resound around us, go over our heads, and sink into our hearts. They are tremendous words, traditional words fashioned under terrific heat. Largely they come from Scripture, but also in part from the smithy of dogma. They come to us in the sermon and are the substance of all liturgical texts. We pick up on them in our confession of faith and we sing them in our psalms and hymns.

Taken all together these form the caption to accompany the picture of reality. They clarify the picture. This is the didactic element in the church service; we also go to church to learn. But this is an incredibly deep kind of learning, for the church is much more than a school. School primarily develops our intelligence, whereas in church blind eyes are opened, our hearts are shattered, and the darkness of paganism and the demonic is dispersed, the mystery revealed, and death and decay undone.

Acting out the full reality

The worship service is more than teaching, however deep. We also go to church to play things out as they are. The liturgy is a sociodrama in which we together act out the full reality of the world.

We do so not just in the preaching of the Word, or in our confession of faith and our singing. We do it especially in our prayers, but also in our offerings, our confession of sin, the pronouncement of forgiveness, and in our praise. Most of all in the sacraments. In all this, we are celebrating the reality of our world. We pass it back and forth. We play "world' just as children play "house."

For many of us, the word "play" calls up the wrong connotations. We think it is childish, that it doesn't mean anything. Quite the contrary. Play is the highest sort of seriousness. It absorbs us in our totality. We lose ourselves in it and thus come fully to ourselves.

Similarly, we experience the world and ourselves most fully in the sociodrama of the liturgy, where we act out the fullness of reality with the people of God. Only then does the nature of reality fully sink into us – bodily. We discover experientially what everything really is, what we are and what we are here for.

The world at its greatest intensity

We could put it this way: we go to church to experience the world in its highest potential, at its greatest intensity.

This is the counter-pole of an answer we gave earlier, namely, that we go to church to experience human existence to the full. This means that I don't just go to church to appear before the face of God in my naked selfhood. Nor even that I take the totality of my existence with me – all my joys and sorrows, my misfortunes and blessings, my work and my family. It means that we take the whole world to church with us. We go to see what it is in its deepest being, what it represents, and we act it out.

Church-going isn't just existential in nature; it is also cosmic. To go to church we don't first need to detach ourselves from the world to withdraw into our innermost self. This is to interiorize life, religion and worship. It is gnostic. Not that human existence, our selfhood and inwardness aren't part of reality. Of course they are. We aren't just pieces of world. But just as important as the existential pole is the cosmic one. The vast outward world is just as important to God as the individual soul.

We are not called to choose between a pious church and a profane world. That's an error harmful to both church and world. To worship most fully we must take the world with us. And to experience the full potential of the world, namely, as the Kingdom of God, we must go to church.

This supports what we said about praise: it is not just about self but also about being, the being of the world. In fact, this is the starting point of it all. In the work of praise, we bring them together – the existential and the cosmic. And above them both – God. In, with, under and above everything we praise God, simply because he is and he is there.

Patience is a virtue

I woke up last Thursday morning with a head cold and the sense that I was watching my life from someone else's body. Unseasonably warm temperatures gripped Ontario that day and I couldn't tell if I was sweating because of the weather or from a fever. Either way, my lack of energy was directly counterbalanced by an overload of irritability. Knowing this wouldn't be an easy day, I asked God for patience to see me through. Never pray for patience. The Lord may answer your petition with excruciating efficiency.

I gave Jack no argument when he suggested I delay my trip for groceries until noon. That way I'd be able to drop off a tractor tire at the dealership for repairs and pick it up before I came home again. I needed the tire for the garden tractor in order to mow the lawn, a task made more urgent by the forecast of rain in the evening.

I arrived at the dealership just before noon, and told the man I would return in an hour, more than enough time for them to install the new tire on the rim and refill its fluid.

He furrowed his brow, "Well, Ma'am, make it a good hour. All the boys are on lunch break until 1:00."

Normally I approach groceries like a soldier on a mission. But suddenly I had lots of time, a rare event. I lingered at the greeting card section, compared ounce for ounce prices on fruit juices, and read the "best before" dates on every article. I let the young mom with the fretful baby into the cashier's line ahead of me. Somehow I managed to fritter away an hour and a quarter before returning to the tire dealership.

All "the boys" were back from lunch, but apparently only Dave could give me the tire and send me on my way. Dave was on the phone. I stood by as other customers came and left. The phone rang, Dave was now wanted on line 2, even though he was still on line 1.

Desperation set in

A mechanic appeared from the shop, "Can I help you?" he asked.

When I explained my situation he confirmed, "You need to talk to Dave."

A voice came over the P.A., "Dave, line 3 please." Desperation set in. As far as I could see, Dave only had two cars. After fifteen minutes another mechanic came up to the counter and took pity on me.

Intangible Things

Heidi VanDerSlikke

While he loaded up the tire I checked my watch, noting that I could probably be mowing the lawn by 3:30.

With great self-restraint I sailed past Tim Horton's. No time for coffee today. Got to get home and cut that grass. A few minutes outside of town the cars in front of me came to a halt. A flag-man held up his stop sign. Ten minutes later I turned off the truck's engine. Resisting the urge to blow the horn, I sprawled across the seat, and began reading the mail. Another 15 minutes passed before we began to move.

The exhilaration of driving at the speed limit was short-lived. Rounding a corner I hit the brakes. Ahead of me a half dozen vehicles crept along behind a tractor hauling two wagons full of wheat. In all, a trip that normally takes 20 minutes lasted almost an hour that day. I finished cutting the grass just before 6:00 p.m. with no time to clean up before leaving to pick up Jessica from basketball practice.

Parking in front of the house where we were supposed to meet, I glanced at my red nose in the truck mirror, yanked a few cedar twigs out of my hair and tried to dust the cobwebs from my T-shirt. When Jess didn't come out of the house, I finally mustered the nerve to ring the doorbell. My daughter answered the door. She hadn't seen me pull up and was waiting for me, even as I waited for her out front.

"So Mom, what did you do today?" she asked cheerfully.

"Well, Jess, I spent most of the day waiting for one thing or another," I replied.

It struck me later that waiting wasn't really all I had done. While I was waiting I had been learning patience — sort of.

Patience, like most virtues, is more of a process than a product. So, I'm still learning. But I'm not going to pray for it anymore, you can be sure of that.

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont.

Development News

Successful CRC businessman leaves it all

... continued from page 13

countries," DenBok asserts. This philosophy is a departure from some other missions organizations which bring in food and resources from donors outside the country.

To date, International Needs has released 3,500 women and children since 1992 when the first release took place. Today, some 16,000 children and nearly 5,000 women still find themselves captive in village shrines throughout Ghana. Nearly every woman freed becomes a Christian as a result of the work of International Needs, and more fetish priests are also turning to the Lord, which is important since they are influential village leaders.

Amazingly, many other priests are also still releasing the women despite not being converted to Christianity. DenBok accredits these seeming unexplainable acts to the will of a sovereign God working even in the hearts of priests who remain hardened to the gospel. "For a fetish priest to give up his slaves," says DenBok, "it means he's giving up his workforce and industry. They would have to be significantly moved by something to make that decision. Why else but by the sovereignty of God would they do that?"

A backlash to work

Today, DenBok reports a sort of backlash to the work being done by International Needs in Ghana. In light of the number of release ceremonies that have taken place in recent years and the government's banning of the practice of Trokosi, "traditionalists" within the country are attempting to convince villagers and fetish priests alike to go back to the traditional ways of placing women and girls in captivity for the sins of the family. These traditionalists are threatening villagers that the gods will rain sickness and death on their families if they do not go back to the old ways. For villagers new to Christ and weighed down by the old belief system, DenBok believes International Needs is at a critical juncture in its ministry. He encourages churches and individuals to pray for International Needs.

PHOTO COURTESY JOHN DENBOK

John DenBok

A wonderful boss

John DenBok, who is the father of five children and who has his license to preach, travels throughout Classis Huron, delivering with urgency and passion the spiritual and financial needs of International Needs. When I asked him to give some idea of what he had given up in the corporate world when he joined International Needs, he turned my question inside out. "It's not what I've given up," he said. "It's what I've gained. I've gained the wonderful sense of making a real and lasting difference. I've seen people come to Christ and I shake with humility to think that maybe my work has helped. After all, it's Him I'm working for. I have a wonderful boss!"

DenBok says seeing the world in larger terms has solidified his belief that seemingly insurmountable problems can be solved with the gospel of Jesus Christ. "It's standing up against injustices; it's Christians giving back a little of what God has blessed them with. I've gained insight into what Paul speaks about in Romans 1:12; to 'mutually encourage' one another."

He many not appear on the cover of *BusinessWeek* magazine anytime soon, but John DenBok doesn't care. His mission in life is to be Christ-like and to live out the mandate to make disciples of all men and women. And you don't need a pinstriped suit to accomplish those annual spiritual revenues!

If Christian Courier readers wish to learn more about the ministry of International Needs, e-mail **inc@internationalneeds.com** *or call John DenBok's office at (705) 445-6627 or the Langley, B.C. office at (604)-702-9805.*

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CHRISTMAS FOOD PARCELS

Netherlands Bazaar is again preparing Christmas packages for needy families of Dutch descent in Ontario. If you know of such a family, submit their name by **November 13, 2002**, to surprise them with a food parcel at Christmas. Please supply the number of family members, the ages of the children and the reason they merit aid. Include the name and telephone number of a contact person who can verify the information.

Send letters to:
Committee Netherlands Bazaar
Attn: Mrs. G. Spaans
15 Pavilion St.
Unionville ON L3R 1N8
or call one of the committee members:
Ge Spaans 905-477-1243
Lia de Greet 905-878-1040
Bets Speelman 416-742-1172
Jannie Thomas 416-223-5026

Netherlands Bazaar raises money by holding huge Bazaars. Last year it distributed 424 parcels to needy families and sent 100 disadvantaged children to summer camp.

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News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

IF YOU HAD BEEN IN Paris, France, during the first two weeks of October you could have gone to the Autoshow, or, as the official title is "Le Mondial de la Automobile 2002." Car manufacturing is the world's largest industry, seen by governments everywhere as the savior of the country. In fully motorized continents, Europe and North America, it employs up to 20 per cent of the workforce, in various activities, including undertaking and hospitals: world-wide cars kill a million people — predominantly pedestrians, the majority in poor countries — and injure and maim for life many more millions.

Nevertheless there is something about owning a car that is fascinating. I saw a licence plate the other day: "My Freedom". How nice and how naive. One of my books, *Highways to Heaven*, traces the history of the automobile — the word actually means "self mover" — and relates the development from its crude beginnings about 117 years ago, when the first real attempts to motorize the horse-drawn carriage were made.

In 1890 an estimated two million horses were needed in New York City to make the largest urban area in the world function. These big beasts, however, made life intolerable for the eight million living in the over-crowded and under-ventilated tenements. Before long New York — any large city — would have been buried in horse manure. Too bad horse manure did not generate horse-sense in the city: rather it seems that now all the B.S. comes from there.

BACK TO PARIS, WHERE the brand new cars dazzle your eyes with their colorful exteriors and sex appeal, rivaling that of the models inviting you to explore their interiors — of the cars, of course. Nevertheless underneath the bold shapes, the multiple airbags and satellite navigation aids, the car's basic principle — based on Karl Benz's internal combustion engine — is little changed since 1885: they still need to burn oil to go anywhere.

Lately car sales have again been buoyant, made more attractive by zero percent financing, their seductive shapes and their ever emotional appeal. After all, cars personify our individualistic religion to which we, in our luxurious cells, retreat, enjoying some private moments away from spouse and kids and career concerns. So, in opulent isolation, incomparably more comfortable than medieval monks in their voluntary frugality, we meditate and communicate with the "Holy Spirit of Power", which gives us control and speed and a sense of domination. Here, in the technological temples of our own making, we imagine ourselves to be on our "Highways to Heaven."

Of course, we know too well that cars are not on the road to heaven: the opposite direction may be more correct. We also know that we have to do something about that infernal internal combustion engine, lest we all end up combusted as well. So billions are being spent to find a new source of power, and the most promising is the fuel-cell, based on hydrogen, which emits only water and generates electricity to power the motor. However, even though the big Auto men claim that these miracle motors will be on the market by 2010, auto firms face the major challenge of how to store and transport hydrogen, a very volatile substance.

HYBRIDS ARE AN option, but the problem with these are that those who bought a Toyota Prius or Honda Hybrid are in for a surprise when they have to replace the batteries after a few years. Diesel engines may be a better answer thanks to the "common rail injection system" which burns the fuel thoroughly and reduces engine noise and noxious emissions which are the most economical non-hybrid cars on the market.

Volkswagen has long been a pioneer in the fuel-efficient direct injection diesel type, and has demonstrated a bullet-shaped car which can travel 100 kilometres on just one litre of fuel. Its current Golf and Jetta TDI compare favorably with the hybrid vehicles in fuel consumption and are rated higher by *Consumer Report Magazine*.

SKEPTICS CLAIM THAT IT could well be 30 years before fuel-cell powered vehicles go into full production, mainly because gasoline is so dirt cheap in North America, the largest single market in the world. The low price at the pump here, about one-third of that in Europe and Japan, encourages Americans to drive bigger cars and make them less willing to pay a premium for economy models, the reason why GMC has scrapped its cleanest U.S. cars, the Chevrolet Prizm and Metro, due to weak demand. So, in the country with the highest membership in the "Highway to Heaven" church, and in a world where for every two barrels of oil consumed the industry adds less than one barrel to its reserves, the USA needs energy independence. As Iraq contains one of the planet's largest reserves, President Bush and Vice President Cheney — both made rich by oil — need what Saddam has.

In spite of a booming Canadian economy, there are signs of bubble trouble. Bubble, bubble, trouble, trouble. It wasn't all that long ago that Japan was seen as the economic model of the world. That was in the late 1980s when the Tokyo Imperial Palace grounds were valued as high as the entire State of California. That was when, with property prices so high, the banks gave mortgages based on those inflated figures. That was when the Nikkei, the stock market index there, reached the astronomical height of 41,000.

BUBBLE, BUBBLE, trouble, trouble. Today this same index is well below 9,000 and still sinking, an 80 per cent drop, with land prices suffering the same fate, of course, but not the bank loans.

Here the Nasdaq plummeted from 5,000 to less than 1,200, a similar decline. One of my rules of life is that when there is trouble — and I do get into hot water occasionally — I deal with it right away. The Japanese seem different. They stick their heads into the sand and pray that Father Fortune will smile again. So far he hasn't.

So the Japanese bankers sits on their hands watching as the security on which their loans are based melts away. Now even a zero interest rate isn't enough to spark a recovery. In a desperate attempt to pull the economy out of a recession, the Japanese government spent enormous sums on public works: bridges to nowhere, highways with no traffic. Now the last bridge has been built, and the last piece of open land paved over, so what's next?

Good question. A question not only Japan struggles with, but we as well. We, too, are seeing zero money: almost all new cars today are sold on that basis, in an equally futile attempt to prevent a deeper contraction. Just as Japan experiences a limit to creating more infrastructure, so here too there is a ceiling to new car sales. Then what? Bubble, bubble, trouble, trouble.

WHEN NORTEL WAS AT its bubble peak, $125.00 per share, people felt rich and secure and bought houses, cars, boats, cottages. Now it is 75 cents and still sinking, and folk, short on savings and long on debt, especially in the United States, have come to realize that when jobs disappear, a few dollars under the mattress may come in handy. But saving money means no new car, no new furniture, no exotic trips to wherever. Saving money means weaker demand for goods worldwide and this causes prices to drop.

Disinflation, the stop in the rise of prices, is a welcome sign. When prices actually go down and plain cash, looneys in the old sock, increases in value, deflation means that the bubble really has turned into trouble. Deflation means that people stop spending, because a car, a house, a tool, cost less tomorrow than today and even less the day after tomorrow. Deflation means that debt, acquired on the cheap, has to be repaid in ever-more expensive currency. Bubble, bubble, soon we'll be in real trouble, because there is a distinct chance for double danger: (1) an economy slipping into a double-dip recession, and (2) Bush in the White House, pre-occupied with Iraq, helping the wealthy become wealthier and not caring about sharing with the rest.

Every bubble gives trouble. We've had it so good for so long that we've forgotten about the business cycles. Yet they are as old as history. In the Bible Joseph tells the pharaoh to expect seven years of plenty followed by seven lean years. That was the first documented business cycle and the first example of an accurate forecast. During the past 20 years, the American economy has been in recession less than 10 per cent. In the 90 years before World War II this occurred 40 per cent of the time.

The current condition resembles the pre-war variety, says *The Economist*, which warns, in a special Survey of the World Economy, that "after decades of declining economic volatility the business cycle is likely to become more volatile... and that the American recession ... is far from over."

THANKS TO CHEAP money and well-paying jobs, everybody has closets full of clothes; our houses are bursting with toys and computers and many have two cars in their double garages. Combine this with an aging population, trying to conserve their retirement funds as old age will last longer than ever, and fearing to be forced to pay for private health care as sicknesses become too costly for the State to finance, and the stage is set for even less consumer spending.

Now something really different is developing. In the early 1980s economic stagnation and high inflation bred the new symptom of "stagflation." Today pollution is responsible for shrinking water and food resources, leading to inflating the cost of basic necessities, while, due to global overproduction, the cost for material goods is going down. So again something new, thanks to a combination of pollution, inflation and deflation. It also deserves a new name: I call it *pol-flation* also reflecting the role politics play in this matter.

Bert Hielema did not buy a Prius after all. His choice for a new car was a Jetta TDI with a small diesel engine, giving him 23 km to a litre.

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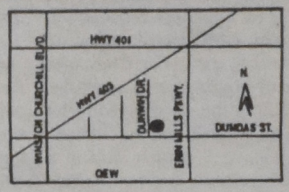

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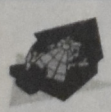

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Classifieds

Classifieds

As of May 1999:
Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, thirteen days prior to publication date.

RATES

All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (P.I.) + GST (columns are two inches wide). Display advertising re.: businesses and organizations: minimum $18.20 P.I. + GST, depending on design and frequency.

PHOTOS

There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.I., but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

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b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Birth Announcement

Geerlinks

With joy and thanksgiving to our Lord,
Randy & Lisa (nee Scholten)
announce the arrival of

Karissa Leigh

weighing 8 lb. 14 oz. on September 27, 2002, in Palmerston, Ont.
Karissa is a little sister to Alexandria. She is the 4th grandchild for Jack and Theresa Scholten and 16th grandchild for Bert and Grace Geerlinks. She is the 4th great-grandchild to Alice Van Gyssel and another to Jane Drost and Karen Scholten.
Home address: P.O. Box 194, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0

Birthday

It is with great joy and thanksgiving to God, that we celebrate with our Mom, Grandma, and Great-Grandma,

Tena Batterink

her 80th birthday on October 30,2002.
We invite all family and friends to join us in our celebration by attending an Open House from 2:30 - 4:30 PM on Wednesday, Oct. 30 at Trillium Village 400 Dominion St., Strathroy, Ontario.
Her loving family,
Leo (her husband of 56 years)
Mary & Ed Faber
Heather & Tim, Mitchell Graves
Tim & Leanne
Ryan & Jody
Jon (& Jill Ormiston)
Annette Westra
Ian, Leona
Len & Nienke Batterink
Marie, Jen, Josh, Kristin
Clarence & Jeri Batterink
Melanie, Kyle
Mailing Address:
Unit 153 - 400 Dominion St.,
Strathroy, ON N7G 3G8

Anniversary

1952 October 17 2002

"A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:12b).

It is with joy in our hearts and thankful gratitude to the Lord that we announce the 50th anniversary of our parents,

NICOLAAS and HILLY LENOS
(nee VANDERWAL)

We thank God for the faithfulness that he has shown throughout these years. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to guide and bless them in the years ahead.
Congratulations from their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild:
John & Bev Lenos – *Waterford, Ont.*
Shawn & Laura Lenos
Tyrell
Sandy & Al Steenbeek (fiancé)
Brad, Nick
Ray & Sonya Lenos – *Simcoe, Ont.*
Annemarie, Jessica
Clarence & Julie Lenos
Caledonia Ont.
Wilma & Albert Veenkamp
Sarnia, Ont.
Nicole, Matthew
Howard & Joanne Lenos
Kitchener, Ont.
Karla, Josiah, Jared, Derek
Hannah & Bob Elgersma
Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.
Karmen, Calvin, Katrina
Rosanne & Andrew van der Woerd
Burlington, Ont.
Shannon, Esther, Joseph
An **Open House** will be held on October 26, 2002 from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. at Parkview Meadows in Townsend.
Home address: R.R. #5, Waterford, ON N0E 1YO

Church Event

With thanksgiving to God, the **Smithers** Christian Reformed Church celebrates its **50th Anniversary** on **Nov. 23-24**, 2002. All former members are invited to attend. For further information, please contact Aren Bakker at 250-847-2369 or Harry Kruisselbrink at 250-847-3638.

Anniversary

1952 November 6 2002
Friesland Acton, Ont.

CONGRATULATIONS

Heit and Mem, Paka and Beppe on your **50th Wedding Anniversary**.

DICK and AGNES WYGA
(nee Straatsma)

"Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock."
Matthew 7:24

Otto & Anne Wyga *Ariss ON*
Michael, Erin, Seth, Jeffery
Sonya & Gerry Nap *Guelph, ON*
Calvin & Marie, David (†), Richard,
April & Craig
William(†), Alicia, Abigail.
Andy Wyga *Guelph, ON*
Calvin & Mary Wyga *Limehouse, ON*
Toni, Eileen, Erin
Fred & Dianne Wyga *Rockwood, ON*
Ryan, Nathan
Sandy & Steve Biffis-Kri
North Bay, ON
Jeremy & Carrie - Jordan,
Jonathan, Ben, Wes, Jesse
We invite you to an Open House which will be held, the Lord willing, on Sat. Nov. 9, 2002 from 2-4 p.m. at the Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Acton Ontario. Best wishes only please.
Home address:
RR#2, Acton, ON L7J 2L8

Obituaries

Drouwenermond Chatham
Drenthe Ontario
The Netherlands Canada
April 18, 1909 August 29, 2002

HENNY (HENDRIKJE) BROUWER-LEFFERS

was called home by her Lord and Savior on August 29, 2002. She was predeceased in death by her husband Berend in 1996 and daughter Jannie in 1954. Dear mother of:
Harry & Helen Brouwer
Thamesville, ON
Ann & Jim Dieleman -*Thamesville, ON*
Jim & Teny Brouwer -*Chatham, ON*
Joanne & Harry DeVries
Dresden, ON
Henry & Jane Brouwer - *Ancaster, 0N*
John & Kathy Brouwer -*Waterloo, ON*
Rhea & Jake VanBreda -*Belleville, ON*
Also surviving are 32 grandchildren and 50 great-grandchildren.
The funeral service was held on September 2, 2002 in the First Christian Reformed Church, Chatham, Ontario. Pastor Paul Stadl officiated.
"He who believes in me will live even though he dies." John 11:25

HENDRIK BULTHUIS (HANK)

On October 1, 2002, at the age of 79, our beloved husband, father and grandfather, passed into the presence of his Lord. Dear husband of Bep (Elizabeth), father of: Betty Schinkel (Brian), Karen Bryant (Dana), and Don Bulthuis (Marina).
The funeral took place at Immanuel Christian Reformed Church on Friday, October 4, 2002.
Correspondence Address:
Mrs. H. Bulthuis
Saint Elizabeth Village
12 Father Csilla Terrace
Hamilton, ON L9B 2L9

Obituaries

Entered into rest from Shalom Manor, Grimsby on September 4, 2002

PIETER POORTINGA

formerly of Townsend, at the age of 98 years, 3 months, 17 days.
Pieter, a former resident of Parkview Meadows, Townsend is survived by his wife Elisabeth (Steenhuis), (predeceased by his first wife Iekje Renkema in 1945), and children Andy and Rose, Peter and Ginny, Hank and Joanne, Chris and Connie, Patricia and Greg Haskell, and the late Kathy Oussoren (1991) and Egbert Poortinga (2000). Loving Opa of 28 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren and predeceased by great-great-grandson Michael (1991). Brother of the late Renze, Pier and Auktje.
"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. 1:21

The Lord in his infinite wisdom took unto himself

HERMAN BUSSINK

at age 71. Dearly loved husband and best friend of Dieny (Nyman), loving father of
Raymond & Tracey
Harriet & Rick
Jason & Wanda
devoted grandpa to six grandchildren.
Dearly loved by
Hank & Fran Rensink,
Rynda & Bill Westervelt
Annette & Joe Keogh
Darlene & Rodger Gow
loving opa of 14 grandchildren.
Dear brother of Hermien and the late Hendrik Korten of Fenwick and two brothers and seven sisters in Holland.

Though he will be sadly missed we are comforted by the knowledge that he is with his heavenly Father and forever singing his praises.
Correspondence address:
Dieny Bussink, 221 Grand St
Brantford ON N3R 4C2.

Aalten Brantford
The Netherlands Canada
May 23, 1931 Sept.28, 2002
"Rejoice in the Lord always" Phil. 4:4
The Lord took home our beloved brother, brother-in-law and uncle

HERMAN BUSSINK

Beloved husband of Dieny (Nyman).

Aalten: H. Lubbers-Bussink
D. Bussink
G. Bussink-Hengeveld
N. Van Schyndel-Bussink
Fenwick: H. Korten-Bussink
Dinxperlo: G. Kip-Bussink
Lochem: J. Schouten-Bussink
Winsum: S. Bussink-Ombelet
De Heurne: R. Lammers-Bussink
W. Lammers
Aalten: W. Bussink
R. Bussink-Nyman
W. Douma-Bussink
L. Douma
D. Stronks-Bussink
B. Stronks
And many nieces and nephews.
Correspondence address:
Mrs. H. Korten,
3436 Canboro Rd
Fenwick ON L0S 1C0

May 6, 1909 Sept. 29,2002
Borculo, The Neth. Essex, Ont.

Peacefully in Leamington District Hospital, our dear wife, mother, Oma, great-Oma and great-great-Oma

CHRISTINA ZWIERS (Meerbeek)

Went to be with her Lord and to her eternal home.
Beloved wife of Albert John Zwiers and dear mother of:
Hendrika Draaijer
Rijssen, The Netherlands
Herman & Margie Zwiers - *Sarnia, ON*
Henry & Audrey Zwiers - *Orillia, ON*
Jerry & Corrie Zwiers - *Ruthven, ON*
Gerda & Bill Bovenkamp - *Essex, ON*
Alice & Irwin Agocs - *Ruthven, ON*
Christina was Oma to 23 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-granddaughter. Predeased by a son-in-law, Ab Draaijer (2001) in The Netherlands, and one brother and two sisters in The Netherlands.
Service of remembrance and worship was held at the Essex Christian Reformed Church.
Mailing address:
H. Zwiers, 1365 Murphy Rd.
Sarnia, ON N7S 2Y7

Church News

The fall meeting of
Classis Eastern Canada
will be held, D.V., on **Oct. 18 & 19,** 2002, in the CRC of Williamsburg, Ontario. On Friday, Oct. 18, candidate B. Ponsen, pastor-elect of First CRC of Kemptville will be examined, as well as Mr. David Sutherland of Halifax for Art. 7 (Step 1). Materials for this meeting are to be sent to the Stated Clerk. James Kooistra S.C.

Classis Niagara
plans to meet in regular session on Wednesday, **January 15, 2003** at the Bethany CRC in Fenwick. Items for the agenda, including requests to address Classis, should be in my hands by December 2, when the agenda will be prepared.
John TeBrake, Stated Clerk

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Classifieds

Event	Job Opportunities

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Herman Den Hollander
Organist
Andre-Knevel

On Friday, **November 22, 2002**
at 8:00
Benefit Concert in **Hebron Christian Reformed Church, Whitby, Ontario**
Corner Thickson Road & Crawforth Street.
Admission: adults - $10.00, seniors and students - $8.00, families - $25.00.
Come and join us for an evening of music and song.
The funds raised at the concert will go toward furnishings for the newly built Friendship Hall of Durham Christian Homes.
For more information, please call
1-905-665-1767.

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CALVIN College

Faculty Openings

The college is seeking applications for possible openings beginning September 2003 in the following departments:

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  - Mass Media
  - Performance Studies
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- English
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- History
- Mathematics
- Music
  - Voice (male)
  - Music Education
- Nursing
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- Psychology
- Religion
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- Spanish
- Statistics

Calvin College seeks faculty members who affirm the Christian faith as expressed by the Reformed creeds and have academic and personal qualifications for teaching and scholarship. Applications from ethnic minorities in any discipline are strongly encouraged.

Interested persons or persons who wish to make nominations should correspond with the chair of the respective department at: Calvin College, 3201 Burton Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 USA

Calvin College is an equal opportunity employer.

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Rosa Flora (est. 1978) is an established and expanding greenhouse grower and wholesaler located in the picturesque Grand River country, shipping to Ontario and the northeastern U.S.

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SHEPHERD NEEDED:

God's flock of 99 active professing members at **Maranatha CRC** in **Calgary, Alberta** is in need of a Shepherd to guide us in living our lives for our Lord and King. The Shepherd we are seeking should be able to nurture the faith journey of all age levels. Effective preaching is very important to us but we also enjoy worshiping our Lord and Savior with our musical gifts and talents. Maranatha is an urban church located in a rapidly growing urban center of about 1 million souls nestled against the foothills of the Canadian Rockies in southern Alberta.

To find out more about us and obtain a church profile contact us at
Search Committee Maranatha CRC,
2111 - 52 St. N.W. Calgary,
Alberta, Canada T3B 1C3
or Don Vandertol 403-274-9879 Email: lotrednav@shaw.ca

The Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia (SCSBC)

is searching for a

DIRECTOR

to join their leadership team

The SCSBC, committed to dynamic, biblical worldview, serves its forty member schools by giving leadership and building community in a number of areas including curriculum, school and board leadership, government relations and financial stewardship. Persons with significant gifts and experience in a number of the above areas are encouraged to apply. The ideal candidate will be an effective team builder and have a graduate degree, significant experience in Christian education, demonstrated leadership abilities and strong interpersonal skills. A gift conscious Board will design a leadership team to promote the story of greater biblical faithfulness in exciting and challenging times.

All applications should be received by December 15, 2002. Please direct your inquiries to:

Search Committee
Janet Hitchcock, Chair
7600 Glover Road, Langley, BC V2Y 1Y1
Phone 604-888-6366 Fax: 604-888-2791
Email: scsbc@twu.ca Website: www.scsbc.ca

HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR:
Commencing August 2003

Smithville District Christian High School was established in 1980 and is located in the Niagara region. SDCH serves approximately 275 students in grades 9 - 12 with a staff of 23. Visit our website **www.sdch.on.ca**

We are seeking a visionary Christian secondary school administrator to competently and effectively manage our school from a Reformed perspective, according to the board's policies and goals. The SDCH board is committed to operating under policy governance, based on John Carver's principles.

All applications should be received by **November 1, 2002**.
For a complete information package, please contact:

Administrator Search Committee
c/o Don Dam
5 Garden Drive
Grimsby, Ontario L3M 3X8
phone: 905-945-8690
email: dondam@westbrooksystems.com

Classifieds

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Covenant Christian Reformed Church in **Winnipeg, Manitoba**, is looking for an Associate Pastor. The primary role, especially in the first year, is to strengthen the ministry to youth and establish the ministry to young adults. Some preaching will be expected, and once the ministry to youth and young adults is established, assisting the Senior Pastor in a variety of tasks, as agreed upon by Council.

For a complete job description or to apply, please contact:

Tina Brakkel
653 Knowles Ave.,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2G 2K3
Phone: 204-667-1116)
or email: ccrc@mts.net

Music Director/Pianist
St. Cuthbert's **Hamilton**
See web: **http://home.nas.net/~stcuth/musicad.htm**

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Miscellaneous

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Redeemer University College
welcomes applications for possible part-time faculty positions in the following departments for the Winter 2003 academic semester:

Art
Chemistry
English
Environmental Science
Physical Education

Applicants should possess a Master's degree or Doctorate, and as a liberal arts and sciences university college rooted in the Reformed tradition of Christianity, we seek candidates who are committed to teaching and pursuing scholarship from this perspective.

Deadline: October 31, 2002 or when filled.

Consult the Redeemer website:
http://redeemer.on.ca/about/openings.html
for a full description.

Direct applications and the names and addresses of three references to:
Dr. Jacob P. Ellens
Vice-President (Academic), Redeemer University College
777 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster, Ontario, Canada L9K 1J4
Fax: 905/648-2134, E-mail: jellens@redeemer.on.ca

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority.

REDEEMER
University College

OCSAA Executive Secretary

Ontario Christian Schools Administrators Association (OCSAA) invites applications for the position of Executive Secretary. The candidate will be an organized self-starter with excellent computer skills, including competencies in **Microsoft Office** software (word processing and database) and **QuickBooks** accounting programs. He or she is familiar with the management of OACS member schools. OCSAA's contract with the Executive Secretary involves **450 hours/year**, which includes attending up to 15 meetings per year in the Greater Hamilton area. Pay scale: $17.50 - $19.00/hour depending on experience and expertise. Persons interested in this position should contact:

Gary Postma at ocsaa@mail.com

in order to receive the actual job description and additional information. **Application deadline: Oct. 25.**
We hope to interview candidates on Nov. 8

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL,
Hamilton, invites applications from Christian teachers for a **grade 6**, full time, interim teaching position beginning **November 25, 2002**. Please submit a resume, a brief autobiography and a philosophy of education to:

Mr. T. Postma, Principal
Calvin Christian School
547 West 5th St.
Hamilton ON L9C 3P7

Fax: 905-388-2769 or email: ccs.edu@sympatico.ca
Application deadline is **October 31, 2002.**

CLARKSON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

is a vibrant congregation in **Mississauga**, a suburban area west of Toronto. In addition to our regular programs, we have also launched both Alpha and Network in the last year. So that we might better accommodate our various ministries, we have recently voted to relocate to new and expanded facilities. Currently we have **4 part-time staff positions** open in the areas of:

- Youth Ministry,
- Outreach Ministry,
- Volunteer/Ministry Coordinator
- Worship Coordinator.

These encompass 4 of the 6 strategic priorities in our church's Long Range Plan. While each position represents up to 20-25 hours/week, with the right skill/gift match, we are very receptive to combining two of these openings into a full-time position.

If you have a deep love for the Lord, have gifts and a passion for service in any of these areas, coupled with a demonstrated ability to work in a team environment, we would like to hear from you. An ability to preach occasionally would also be an asset.

Please direct inquiries and résumés to:

Clarkson Christian Reformed Church
1880 Lakeshore Road West
Mississauga, Ontario L5J 1J8
ATTENTION: Ministry Staffing
E mail: mail@clarksoncrc.on.ca

For a closer look at our church, surf over to our Web site at **www.clarksoncrc.on.ca**

Dordt College

Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning 2003-2004 in the following areas:

Criminal Justice
Develop and teach in an interdisciplinary criminal justice program. Qualified applicants should have a background in criminal justice, criminology, sociology, or related field.

Education (Two positions)
Teach introduction, upper-level (elementary and secondary methods), special education.

Spanish
Teach elementary, intermediate, and upper level courses in Spanish language, literature, and culture.

Social Work
Generalist; micro-practice background; methods courses and field practice.

Theology
General education courses in biblical theology and upper level biblical studies courses.

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail:
vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site:
www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

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Penticton - CKOR	8:00 am	800
Port Alberni – CJAV	7:00 pm	1240
Prince George – CIRX	7:00 am	94.3
Princeton – CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers – CFBV	9:15 am	1230
Summerland – CHOR	8:00 am	1450
Vernon – CJIB	9:30 pm	940

ALBERTA

Brooks – CIBQ	8:30 am	1340
Ft. McMurray – CJOK	8:30 am	1230
High River – CHRB	6:30 pm	1140
Edmonton – CJCA	6:00 pm	930
Westlock – CFOK	7:30 am	1370

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Estevan – CJSL	8:00 am	1280
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Altona – CFAM	9:30 am	950
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Atikokan – CFAK	9:30 am	1240
Chatham – CFCO	6:30 am	630
Fort Frances – CFOB	9:30 am	640
Guelph – CJOY	8:30 am	1460
Hamilton – CHAM	7:30 am	820
Kapuskasing – CKAP	7:00 am	580
London – CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Oshawa – CKDO	8:00 am	1350
Owen Sound – CFOS	7:00 am	560
Pembroke – CHVR	10:00 am	96.7
Sarnia – CHOK	7:30 am	1070
Stratford – CJCS	8:45 am	1240
Windsor – CKLW	7:30 am	800
Wingham – CKNX	10:30 am	920

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John – CHSJ	9:00 am	94.1

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown – CFCY	7:00 am	630

NOVA SCOTIA

Bridgewater – CKBW	7:30 am	1000
Digby – CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Halifax – CFDR	8:30 am	780
Liverpool – CKBW	7:30 am	94.5
Kentville – CKEN	8:30 am	1490
Middleton – CKAD	8:30 am	1350
New Glasgow – CKEC	7:30 am	1320
Shelburne – CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
Sydney – CJCB	7:00 am	1270
Weymouth – CKDY	8:30 am	103.1
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EASTERN – ON & PQ – 5 pm Sun.

ATLANTIC – NB, NS, PEI - 6pm Sun

NFLD – 6:30 Sun.

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Our Address: 3475 Mainway PO Box 5070 Stn LCD1 Burlington ON L7R 3Y8

Job Opportunity

Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator
One year Contract
Part-time

The Christian Reformed Church (CRC) has a **part-time contract** opening for a Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator. If you are energetic and self-motivated with a passion for children and youth ministry you may be a candidate for this position. The successful candidate will possess the demonstrated ability to plan and implement a variety of projects, including conferences. Responsibilities include ensuring implementation of the vision and plan for integrated children and youth ministry for the CRC.

You are required to have a college degree, preferably in a field related to children and/or youth ministry, with a minimum of four years experience in children and/or youth ministry. Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively in writing and verbally, both one on one as well as making presentations before a variety of groups, is essential. Commitment to the Reformed faith is required.

Relocation to Grand Rapids, MI or Burlington, ON is not required. Ability to travel, however, is required.

In keeping with our Equal Opportunity policy, racial/ethnic persons are encouraged to apply.

For consideration, submit a copy of your resume and a letter stating your interest by **November 15, 2002** to:

Director of Personnel
Christian Reformed Church
2850 Kalamazoo Ave., SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49560
Voice: 1.800.701.8992 / Fax: 616.224.5896

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items Appearing in this column are run free of charge if they adveritse an admission free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Oct 18	**Liberation Choir**, Fall tour, 8 p.m. Our Lady Immaculate R. Cath. Church. **Guelph**. See ad.
Oct 18,19	**Classis Eastern Canada** fall meeting in the CRC, Williamsburg, Ont.
Oct 19	**Liberation Choir**, Fall tour, 8 p.m. Rehoboth United Ref. Church, **Hamilton**
Oct.19	Organ, Piano, and Flute concert series, **Bowmanville**, Rehoboth CRC. See ad this issue.
Oct.19	**A Day of Encouragement** and training for deacons, elders and other caregivers at Hamilton District Christian High School in **Ancaster**. Theme: "Go out in Joy!" Featuring 50 workshops including special sessions for elders and caregivers. Cost: $45. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or Diaconal Ministries at 905-336-2920 or at www.diaconalministries.com.
Oct.18,19 20	Immanuel Christian School, **Oshawa**, Ont. **40th Anniversary**. For event info, contact Trudy Bouma at 905-623-1103 or email: r.bouma@sympatico.ca
Oct 19,20	First CRC of **Chilliwack B.C. 50th** anniversary. For info & billeting: call Erna Maarhuis 604-794-7140 or e-mail: pjonda@telus.net
Oct 24	**Organ, Piano** and **Flute Concert, Owen Sound ,** Canadian Ref. Church. For more info, contact The Music Group at **(905) 631-1929**
Oct 25	Organ, Piano and Flute Concert, **Burlington**, Ebenezer Canadian Ref. Church. For Info: (905) 631-1929
Oct 25	**CRWRC 40th Anniversary Celebration** at 7:30 PM at **Brampton** 2nd CRC, Steeles Ave(W). Presentations by DRS, Relief and Development. Please join us! Call Peter at 905-453-5271
Oct 26	**Organ**, **Piano** and **Flute** concert, **York** CRC. For more info, contact The Music Group at (905) 631-1929
Oct 26	**CLAC 50th Anniversary Celebration**. Dr. Calvin Seerveld keynote speaker, **Hamilton** District Christian High. For further information, call Pauline at **905-945-1500.**
Oct 26	**Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at Grace Reformed Church, 514 George St., **Dunnville**. Freewill offering. (519) 637-4357
Oct 26	**GIANT BAZAAR** TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL at 650 Walkers Line, **Burlington** from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. **FREE ENTRY.**
Oct 26,27	Rehoboth CRC, **Niagara Falls, 50th Anniversary** weekend of praise, fellowship. For more information, call Michael Havinga 905-358-3534 or mhavinga@becon.org
Nov 1	**Christian Festival Concert** under the direction of Leendart Kooij in Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto** $28/$21/$16. Call 416-636-9779
Nov5	The Annual **2002 Church & the Law Seminar** will be held on Tues., Nov. 5th, 2002 at Bramalea Baptist Church, **Bramalea** located in Greater Toronto. This year's theme is **"Essential Legal Issues for Churches & Religious Charities"**. Registration forms are available at www.charitylaw.ca and the host, Carter & Associates, ph: (519) 942-0001, Fax: (519) 942-0300 or email: seminars@charitylaw.ca.
Nov 8	**Music to Delight**: A program of music with soprano soloist Renée Stalenhoef, organist Ian Sadler, the Harbouraires from Goderich, the Men of Note from Clinton, at **Clinton** CRC, 7:30 p.m. Tickets $10, Children $5. For information, call 519-482-5372.
Nov 9	The **Lighthouse Community Centre** Annual International Dinner and **Silent Auction**, at Buffet King, 410 & Warden, **Scarborough.** Call The Lighthouse at 416-535-6262 for reservations.
Nov 16	**Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham. Also featuring Soloist Elisabeth Enzlin and Chatham-Kent Male Chorus. Sponsored by Chatham Christian Schools. Freewill offering. (519) 352-4980**
Nov 9	**Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools** (OACS) **50th** Anniversary, *Celebrating Pioneers and Visionaries*, **Oakville** Conference Centre. Contact the OACS at 905-648-2100 or oacs@oacs.org to reserve your place.
Nov 16	**Liberation Choir**, Fall tour. 8 p.m. Ebenezer Christian Ref. Church, **Trenton** See Ad.
Nov 22	**Mattianiah** Chr. Male Choir, Benefit Concert in Hebron CRC, **Whitby**, ON 8 p.m. with H. Den Hollander & Andre Knevel. For information, call **905-665-1767**.
Nov 23, 24	Smithers CRC 50th anniversary. **Smithers**, BC. For info: Aren Bakker at 250-847-2369 or Harry Kruisselbrink at 250-847-3638.
Nov 30 - Dec. 1	**Tillsonburg CRC 25th Anniversary**. For event info contact Marg Kriense Lokker 519-877-2519 or e-mail john.lokker@sympatico.ca
Dec 7	**Handel's Messiah** performed by the Arcady Singers & Orchestra, 7:30 p.m. Willowdale CRC, 70 Hilda Av. **Willowdale**, ON Tickets $15 & $10. For info and tickets call Te Deum Music at 416-250-7702.
Jan 17	**Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at First CRC, 181 Charlton Ave, **Hamilton**. Sponsored by World Wide Christian Schools. Freewill offering. (905) 765-5623
Jan 18	**Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, 130 Scugog St., **Bowmanville**. Freewill offering (519) 637-4357

Liberation Choir
Fall Concert Series 2002

Director: Willem van Suijdam
Organ: Ian Sadler

Admission: $10.00

Friday, October 18 at 8:00 pm, Guelph
Church of Our Lady RC, 28 Norfolk St.

Saturday, October 19 at 8:00 pm, Hamilton
Rehoboth United Reformed Church, 77 Glancaster Road

Saturday, November 16 at 7:30 pm, Trenton
Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church, 18 FourthAvenue

Tickets are available at the door or from choir members in advance.

All tickets are general admission. Arrive early as seating is on a first come, first served basis.
For more information, please contact
The Music Group at
(905) 631-1929 or paula@organs.ca

The University of Calgary Campus Ministry Committee
Invites applications for a full time

CAMPUS MINISTER

to establish and develop a brand new campus ministry at the **University of Calgary** in Calgary, Alberta.

The University of Calgary is a young, dynamic university aiming to be among the top five research institutions in Canada and is an integral part of Calgary's growth as a world-class city. Calgary is also a strategic site for exciting new missional activity within the CRC community, and the campus ministry at the University of Calgary is an important addition to God's mission in Calgary. This campus ministry will join several existing campus ministries, serving a diverse undergraduate and graduate student population along with a faculty and staff component. The campus ministry is envisioned to become a leader, influencing the life and spiritual development of the University through an integration of faith and learning.

We are looking for a Christian, strongly committed to the Reformed faith and one who is

- A highly motivated self starter who can develop this new ministry
- Has advanced academic and/or professional degrees
- Has experience working pastorally with youth and students
- Is engaged with contemporary cultural, academic and theological concerns
- Is able to relate well to religious and ethnically diverse groups on campus
- Able to work well with other campus chaplains, both Christians and those of other faiths

A job description is available upon request. Please send a letter of application, a complete resume, two reference letters as well as a brief outline of your personal vision for campus ministry to:

Dr. Warren Piers
S. Robert Blair Professor of Chemistry
University of Calgary
Dept. of Chemistry
2500 University Drive, NW
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4
Email: wpiers@ucalgary.ca

Application Deadline: December 15, 2002

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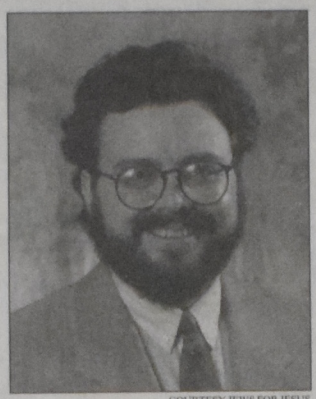
News

Christian leaders declare Jews don't need Christ

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO – Christians should not evangelize Jews because they have a special covenant with God, and do not need salvation through Christ, claim an ecumenical group of Christian scholars, and a group of American Catholic Bishops. But Jews for Jesus and Chosen People Ministries, which focus on evangelizing Jews, have denounced these statements as denying the truth of the Christian Gospel.



COURTESY JEWS FOR JESUS

Andrew Barron, Canadian Director of Jews for Jesus.

No targeting for conversion

The Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relations is a U.S.-based ecumenical group which includes scholars from Catholic, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran and Southern Methodist churches. Since it began in 1969, the Christian Scholars Group has been seeking to develop more adequate Christian theologies of the church's relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people. In September, the group released a statement which set out how the 21 scholars would like Christians to relate to Jews. The scholars make 10 key points, including these:

• **God's covenant with the Jewish people endures forever.** For centuries Christians claimed that their covenant with God replaced or superseded the Jewish covenant. We renounce this claim. We believe that God does not revoke divine promises. We affirm that God is in covenant with both Jews and Christians.

• **Affirming God's enduring covenant with the Jewish people has consequences for Christian understandings of salvation.** Christians meet God's saving power in the person of Jesus Christ and believe that this power is available to all people in him. Christians have therefore taught for centuries that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. With their recent realization that God's covenant with the Jewish people is eternal, Christians can now recognize in the Jewish tradition the redemptive power of God at work, claim the scholars. If Jews, who do not share our faith in Christ, are in a saving covenant with God, then Christians need new ways of understanding the universal significance of Christ.

• **Christians should not target Jews for conversion.** In view of our conviction that Jews are in an eternal covenant with God, we renounce missionary efforts directed at converting Jews, declare the scholars. At the same time, they welcome opportunities for Jews and Christians to bear witness to their respective experiences of God's saving ways. Neither can properly claim to possess knowledge of God entirely or exclusively.

Statement is anti-Semitic

After reading this statement, Rev. Larry Rich, Canadian Director of Chosen People Ministries (a Christian outreach to Jews) quipped, "We've just decided to go out of business after reading that!"

Rich explained he agreed with parts of the statement if properly interpreted, but questions the sections quoted above. Regarding a covenant, "it would depend on what is meant by Jewish covenant." The statement doesn't spell out if this means God's covenant with Abraham, which "has ongoing significance," or God's covenant with Moses, which "required obedience for it to remain in effect," notes Rich. "I agree that God does not revoke divine promises."

Regarding the universal significance of Christ, Rich says, "I think I would go along with John 14:6" – in which Jesus declares, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

Rich questions the ability of Jewish tradition to save people. "Is human tradition to be a substitute for the eternal word of God? I don't think so. I think this is missing the mark."

As for the idea that Christians should not target Jews for conversion, Rich asserts, "That's very anti-Semitic that one group should not be eligible for salvation... and [to] withhold the Word from them. I realize that is not the intent, but the effect."

Andrew Barron, Canadian Director of Jews for Jesus, disagrees with the statement which questions the universal significance of Christ, in particular. It is not Biblical, he says, "to say there's another covenant of salvation [for Jews].... If there's another covenant of salvation, then the cross is rendered meaningless."

Barron also questions the scholars' reference to "recent realization" of God's covenants with Jews. That is "very strange. I don't know how it can be a recent realization," he observes.

Evangelism of Jews not acceptable

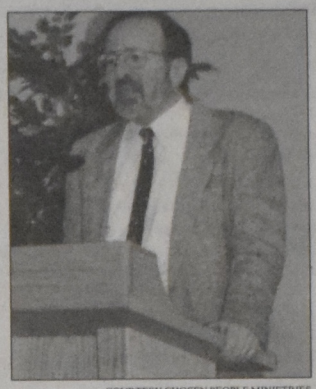
In August, a prominent Catholic group — the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs – released a similar statement, asserting that targeting Jews for conversion is not acceptable. The bishops had met with Jewish leaders in mid-August in Washington, D.C. to discuss topics affecting Catholic-Jewish relations — something they have done twice a year for more than two decades.

In a joint statement, called *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*, the bishops declared that: "A deepening Catholic appreciation of the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people, together with a recognition of a divinely-given mission to Jews to witness to God's faithful love, lead to the conclusion that campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church."

"This joint reflection marks a significant step forward in the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Jewish community in this country," explained Cardinal William Keeler, the U.S. Bishops' Moderator for Catholic-Jewish relations, in the bishops' press release. "Here one can see, perhaps more clearly than ever before, an essential compatibility, along with equally significant differences, between the Christian and Jewish understandings of God's call to both our peoples to witness to the Name of the one God to the world in harmony."

Only one salvation covenant

In response to the Catholic statement, David Brickner, executive director of Jews for Jesus (in the U.S.), asserted, "Jews need to hear the gospel. Period. Excluding my Jewish people from Christian witness is theologically and biblically untenable, yet this is exactly what American Catholic bishops, in concert with Jewish religious leaders, are proposing in their document."



COURTESY CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

Rev. Larry Rich, Canadian Director of Chosen People Ministries.

The document quotes American Catholic bishops as saying that "Jews already dwell in a saving covenant with God."

"I guess that sets us and Jesus in direct contradiction to the document," stated Brickner, in a press release. "This is an attack on Jews for Jesus and other Christian groups who hold to the uniqueness of Christ. Even more troubling is that it is an attack on Jesus' own words: 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.'

"While it is not surprising that leaders in the Reform and Conservative groups of Judaism are in opposition to forthright Jewish evangelism, it saddens me to see the U.S. Catholic hierarchy on the bandwagon. I would like to believe that there are many Catholics world-wide, including Jewish Catholics, who believe in the uniqueness of Christ.

"Either Jesus is the Savior of all or he isn't the Savior *at* all. There is not one covenant of salvation for the Jewish people and another one for the rest of humanity. To say otherwise is to declare Christianity an opinion and faith in Christ merely a personal preference. The uniqueness of Christ is not an optional doctrine to hold for those who are Christians. The Catholic bishops have crossed the line," declared Brickner.

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News Digest

Oktoberfest perfume

MUNICH, Germany (Ananova) – A new perfume has been created in Germany which smells of rancid beer and cigarette butts. The scent is intended to evoke memories of the famous Oktoberfest, Munich's annual homage to beer.

Inventor and pub landlord Peter Inselkammer presented the scent in late September, during the 169th festival. He said he has called the new perfume "Armbrustschuetzenzelt" Crossbow Tent — after the various drinking tents.

Inselkammer said the scent, which costs around £95 a bottle, comes in the shape of a pen that can be easily carried around the fields of the Oktoberfest.

Gun-toting musician

PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil (Reuters) – A gun-toting musician forced a southern Brazilian radio station to play his debut album for more than an hour after apparently having no luck opening the doors of show business, the man's father said recently.

Marcus Vinicius dos Santos, 27, the vocalist for the rock group ACC stormed disc jockey Marcio Paz's booth at Atlantida FM in the city of Porto Alegre and forced him to play his album "Phases of Life."

"He is a quiet boy," his father, Getulio dos Santos, told Reuters. "I'm surprised by what happened."

The episode was reminiscent of the 1994 Hollywood movie *Airheads*, in which dimwitted members of a rock band, fed up with rejection from music industry executives, take matters into their own hands and hijack a radio station to air their songs.

The Brazilian incident ended after about 70 minutes when Vinicius dos Santos surrendered to police, who had evacuated the building. Nobody was injured in the incident and Paz later informed listeners where they could buy the band's album.

Alien on trial

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – A self-proclaimed alien went on trial in Memphis last month, reports the *Globe and Mail*. The city took Robert Hodges to court in September because of his front yard collection of lawn chairs, beach umbrellas, mannequin heads, and toilet seats. Hodges calls it art – the city disagrees. Hodges claims to be Prince Mongo from the planet Zambodia in another solar system, and is a frequent political candidate in Memphis.